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SEPTEMBER 2001

Stone Temple Pilots

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- **Black Crowes**
- **Placebo**
- **Big Wreck**

9 Gear Reviews

- **Epiphone Wildkat**
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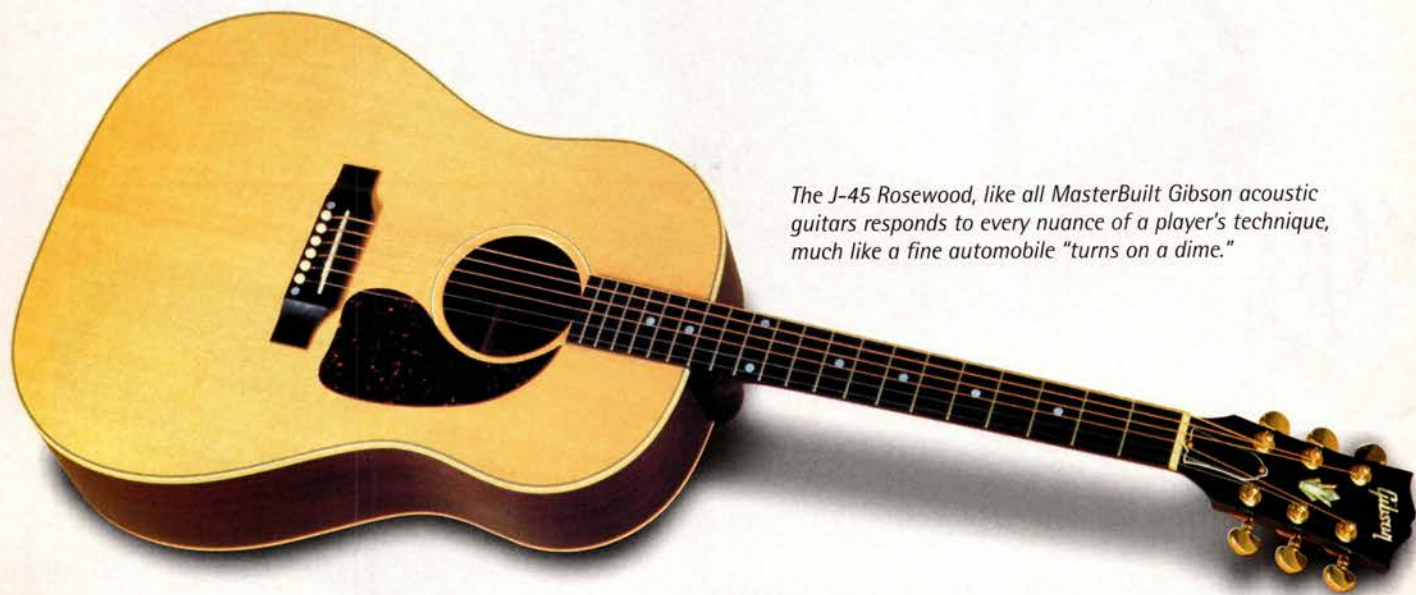


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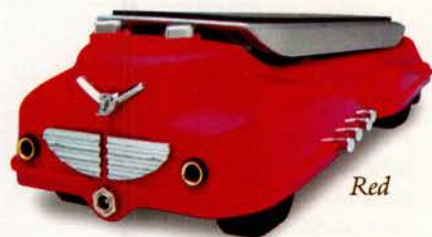
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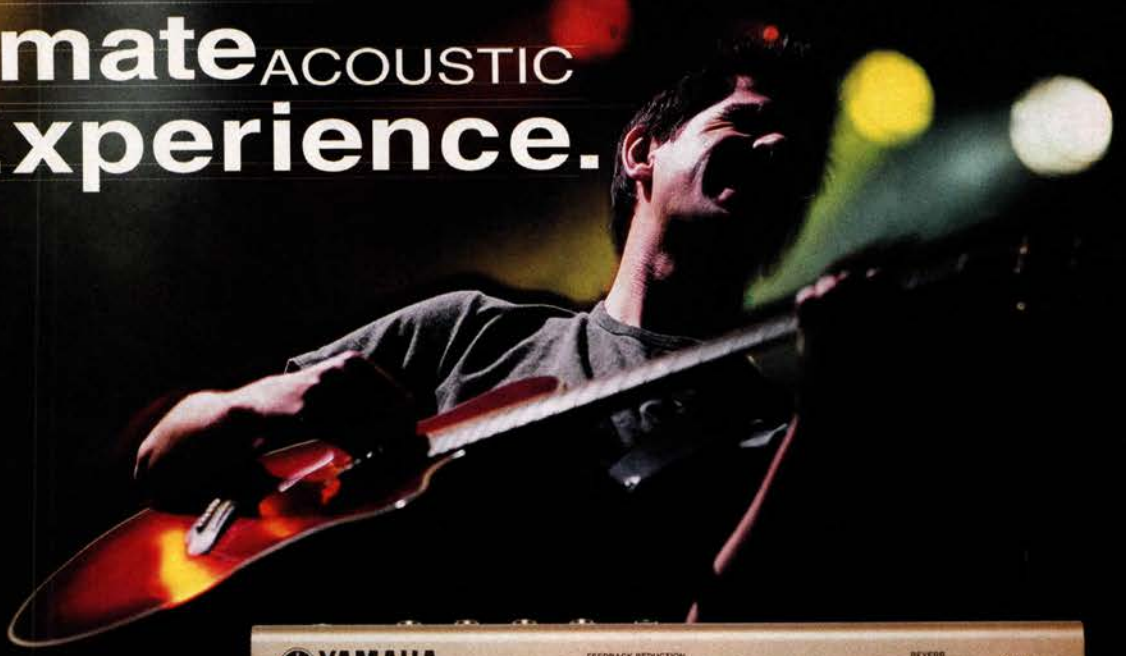
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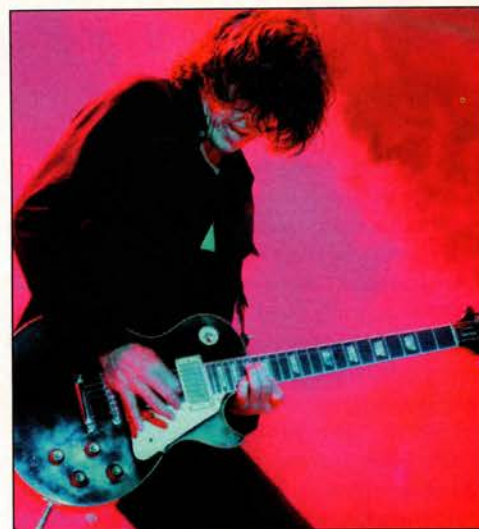
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Soundhole

Walking the Line

The Ancient Greeks had the concept of "all things in moderation" sussed out thousands of years before the Me Generation, dotcom crashes, and Prozac. Sadly, many of us still don't get it. We work too hard. We love too much, or we don't love enough. We wallow in despair or anger or fear. And on and on.

I'm no better than the average career-obsessed wacko. Still, I aspire to a life that gently returns to a comfy center point after veering sharply left or right. While many counsel against "sharp" zigs and zags, and suggest a flight plan that shifts *slightly* to one side or the other, I just can't do that. For me, "moderation" means you can always find your way back to peace, no matter how deeply you fall into a pit of passionate bliss or agony. Of course, if you slip beyond the point of no return, you're gone. Wave goodbye to emotional sta-

bility, sanity, and social acceptance. And, yeah, unless you have a Syd Barrett complex, that's not a good thing.

But here's the tricky part: Whatever your definition of moderation, the quest for balance will usually require that you at least acknowledge what lies outside the safety lines. The visionary poet William Blake maintained that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom, and, well, there is truth in his words.

As musicians, we can risk visits to the palaces of excess and wisdom without tanking our livelihoods, our families, or even our sanity. You won't die if a spasm of exploration is repaid with a bucket full of embarrassing mistakes. Shake it off, focus on the cool bits, and you may discover an alternate path that offers an easy return to stability. In essence, you've peered into that

oft-frightening abyss of the unknown, paid some dues, and returned with a new, supercharged perspective on your creativity. Is a heightened understanding of your musical possibilities worth the chance of sounding like an idiot? Please. The alternative is to walk the center line like a good little Boy Scout or Girl Scout and play riffs you've stolen from others brave enough to dare. Of course, you'll put your own spin on what you've snatched, and probably feel like you've pushed the envelope. You may even get better gigs, score a recording contract, and get an invite to the Grammys. Good for you. (I sincerely mean it.)

But think about the personal, incredibly *affecting* music you might share with your listeners if you have the courage to step off the line. I say, "Do it!" Just make sure you can come back to us and



MARK C. DAVIS

share the marvels of what you've discovered.

Speaking of creative explorations, *GP* debuts some new licks this issue: an expanded New Gear report, a Chops Builder section (a revamped Sessions focused on technique), a factory tour, and industry news. Our serious commitment to address the needs and desires of the guitar community just keeps driving us to develop more relevant, fun, and informative resources. Hey, you asked for this stuff, so I hope you dig it! —MICHAEL MOLENDEN

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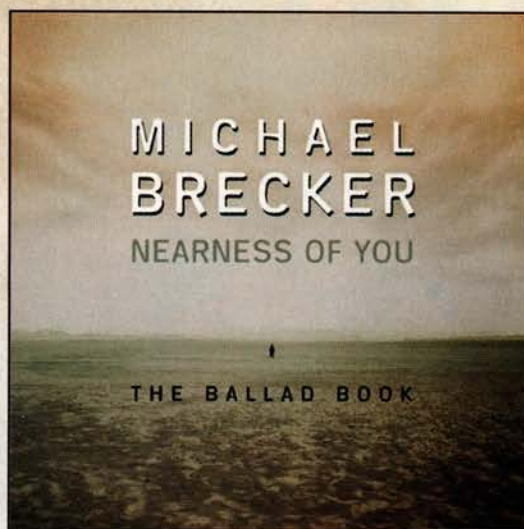
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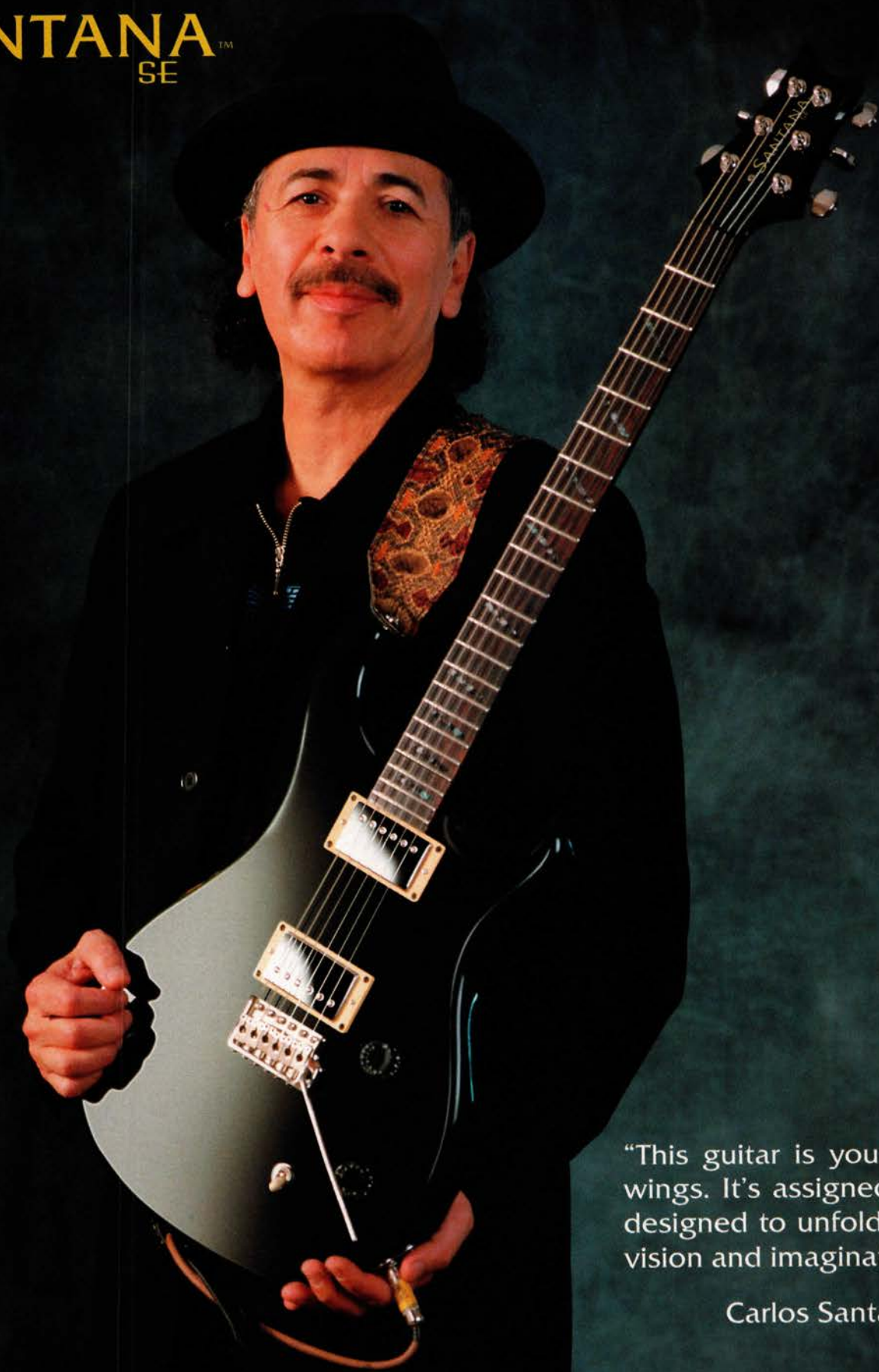
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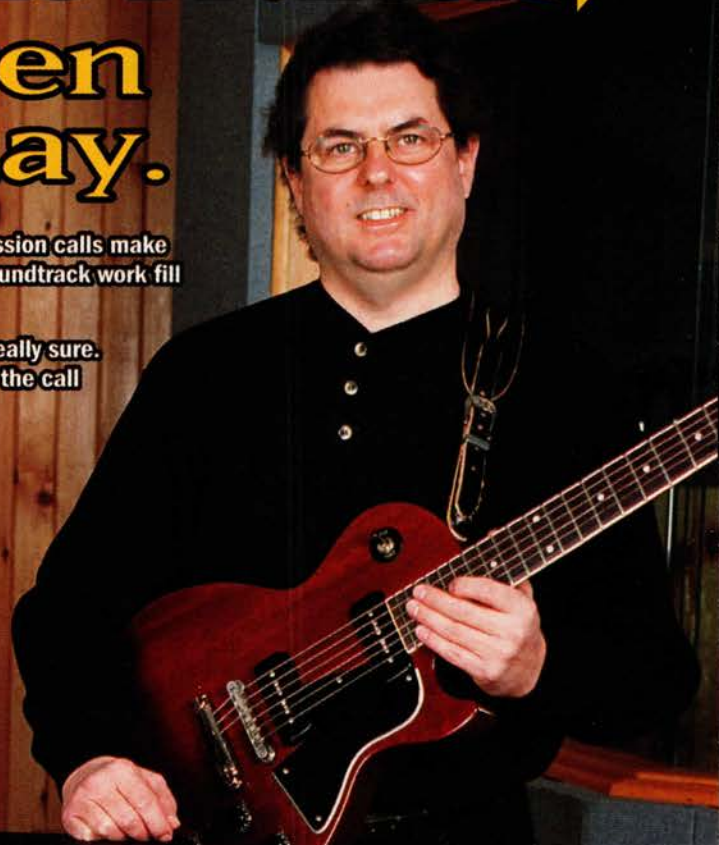
"I usually know what to expect going into a session, but you never are really sure. Producers ask for a 'Stevie Ray Vaughn' type solo, then in the middle of the call suddenly think, 'What if we did a 'Steve Lukather' thing instead... Oh, and I think we need a jazzy thing at the end too.'"

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the traditional method of connecting a guitar body (or acoustic chamber, as we like to call

it) to the fingerboard. No special equipment needed, really. It's been done like this for centuries with just a little glue, a small mallet and a lot of craftsmanship.

The reasons for doing it the old-fashioned way, we admit, are largely subjective. However, we firmly (some say stubbornly) insist that dovetailing produces a stronger, more integrated join and creates better harmonics inside the acoustic chamber.

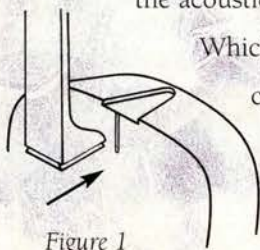


Figure 1

Which of course contributes to a richer, more natural tone.



These three gentlemen are responsible for hand fitting every Larrivée fingerboard to its body. No hardware. Just glue and precise craftsmanship. Why? We believe it produces a tighter join and vastly improves the purity of the sustain.

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increase the cost

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good at what they do. Some fittings

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Like to learn more about guitars and craftsmanship? Visit us online at larrivee.com.



Feedback

Lucky 13

I enjoyed your "Lucky 13" feature on bargain solidbodies in the July '01 issue. I just thought I'd suggest another budget guitar that's worth a mention—the Peavey Wolfgang Special and/or Special Hardtail. This guitar is a quality American product, reasonably priced, and it has a unique personality rooted in tradition.

I also thought I'd say that I enjoy your magazine. I subscribe because the articles are for guitar enthusiasts of all ages—not only for teenagers and their latest trends. Thanks for having some class.

Jeff Walz
Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Thanks for the fun roundup on bargain guitars. As the true guitar nerd that I am, I must say my juices always flow when I read the reviews in your fine magazine. I love to hear about great new product ideas, and I think it's important to try out lots of guitars until you find the right one to help you create. A few months ago, I was trying out some guitars in a music store, and, for the hell of it, I picked up a brand new ESP LTD Viper. Thirteen minutes later, I was driving home with it. What a bargain.

Alex Santilli
East Bridgewater, MA

Credibility

In response to Lalena Fisher [Feedback, July, '01], I find GP's product reviews far more trustworthy than those of most other magazines. Many times, I have tried out an instrument or amp that I've read about in another mag, only to find that the reviewer didn't understand its features. That does a lot more to undermine credibility in my book than GP's stated practice of manufacturer fact checks. Please continue in the same manner.

David Mackie
Seward, NE

Michael Molenda's editorial on the credibility of GP's product reviews [Soundhole, July '01] was timely, as credibility was on my mind when I was recently shopping for a new amplifier. Your points are well taken,

and the thoroughness of your staff's reviews and research sounds impressive. In fact, I have no reason to doubt your staff's credibility except for this: In the year or so that I have been reading GP reviews, I can't recall any that weren't favorable. Hell, they all downright gush over the products.

I have a friend who has never seen a bad movie or eaten at a lousy restaurant. Everything she comes into contact with is "great," "wonderful," "the best ever"—you get the idea. My friend's credibility comes into question because I know that the world is not a perfect place and that *everything* she experiences can't be good. So let's see your staff trash some crappy products in print once in a while.

Jeff Picone
Pittsburgh, PA

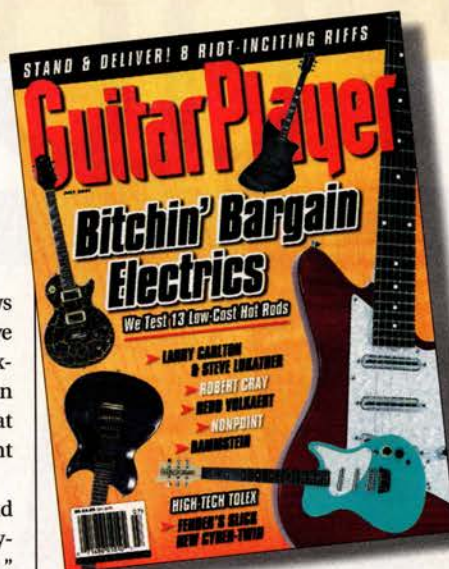
Jeff—I don't think all manufacturers would agree that GP "gushes" over every product! But you're correct in stating that no product we've reviewed in the past three or so years has been trashed. The fact is, most products these days are well-made and deliver on their promise. In addition, we strive to cover useful, quality gear that we feel readers should check out. Why waste your time—and ours—discussing products that simply don't cut it? Although journalists love to zing "clever" derogatory comments, I don't think a slam fest serves the best interest of our readers, so we're committed to accurately evaluating the pros and cons of well-conceived gear.

—MM

What Are Words For?

I've been reading your magazine for more than 15 years and have always enjoyed and appreciated your product reviews. But there's one thing I occasionally struggle with—the adjectives you use to describe tones.

As a writer, I appreciate the difficulty of describing something as intangible as a sound—and I think you do a great job—but, sometimes, I must admit I'm stumped. I know what you mean when you say it's bad for a piezo-equipped acoustic to quack. But I only think of food when you talk about pickups that are creamy and buttery. And I think of fashion when you describe amps as tweeds and



brown. Is it good or bad when highs are glassy? How about when they're chimy? I think it's bad when a sound is boxy, but what about if it's chunky? And I can't be the only one who doesn't know what a "plexi sound" is.

To help readers who don't always get your sonic descriptions could you provide a tone glossary? Maybe you can even reference a famous recording where a particular sound is apparent. I think a lot of readers would appreciate it. And thanks very much for your consistently high-quality reviews.

Jonathan Mann
Phoenix, AZ

OOPS!

We committed a journalistic boo-boo in the June '01 Fretwire by not fact-checking our sources. The information we culled from a press release regarding a possible strike at Hollywood's Musicians Institute was erroneous, and GP published an inaccurate account. We humbly apologize to MI's administrators, teachers, and students for the flub.

Thanks to Christopher Clement of Santa Clara, California, who busted us for saying Kahler was out of business in the June '01 Pawnshop Prize. Kahler is alive and well. Visit them at kahlerinternational.com.

Address correspondence to Feedback, c/o Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403, or e-mail us at guitplyr@musicplayer.com. GP regrets that until the advent of the 40-hour workday we will not be able to answer every letter.

TOOLBOX*



ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

RAGE AGAINST THE GARDEN?: Though they previously dispelled the "rumor," it has been confirmed that ex-Soundgarden vocalist **Chris Cornell** and the remaining members of **Rage Against the Machine** have indeed come together. Cornell, along with guitarist **Tom Morello**, bassist **Tim Commerford**, and drummer **Brad Wilk** have reportedly recorded 20 songs for release, although the supergroup's name, label, and album release date are not yet determined. . . . **GUITAR TOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA:** Fender has joined forces with the South Dakota State Lottery to create the "Guitar Town" scratch ticket. In addition to cash prizes, ticket scratchers can win one of 100 custom Fender American Series Strats, finished in Graffiti Yellow—the official color of the South Dakota lottery. At the time of purchase,



> SETUPS OF THE STARS John Scofield

For almost 20 years, jazz revolutionary John Scofield has played one main guitar—a semi-hollow 1981 Ibanez AS200. According to Sco, a semi-hollow box allows him to get jazz, fusion, and rock tones without the feedback common to larger archtops. The humbucking pickups and electronics on his mainstay ax are stock, although a metal jack plate was added to reinforce a crack in the guitar's top, and the stock coil-cut switch was disabled. Both pickups are 1/8" from the strings, though Scofield plans on bringing them closer to fatten up the

tone—especially the bridge pickup, which gets the most use.

The bound, 24 3/4" ebony fingerboard measures 1 11/16" at the nut, and the original frets have been replaced with meaty .108"x.048" wire. Scofield keeps the neck practically straight, with .002" relief at the 12th fret.

At the 12th fret, the AS200's low action measures a bit over 3/64" on the treble side, and 4/64" on the bass side. At the nut, the strings are a low .008" over the 1st fret, except for the low E string, which is at .020". The stock nut has a brass laminate that yields more consistent tones between open and fretted notes.

Scofield uses custom D'Addario strings, gauged .013, .016, .022, .032, .042, .052. Although his unwound third string is quite heavy, Sco says the guitar's low action helps eliminate any potential intonation problems. If there is a problem, Sco simply "plays around it." —GARY BRAWER, brawer.com



Classical guitar great Sharon Isbin grins as she grips her new Grammy.

players can also receive one of 120,000 custom picks, perfect for scratching lottery tickets or, you know, playing guitar. . . . **YOU GO, GIRL!** Congrats to *GP* Advisory Board member **Sharon Isbin**,

> CUTTING EDGE MOTU 828

Widely known for its Digital Performer audio-editing software, Mark of the Unicorn recently unveiled its 828 Firewire audio interface (\$795), which makes it possible to turn any Firewire-equipped iBook, iMac, or PC into a portable digital studio. This is a huge deal. Although notebook-based studios have been around for a while, pro-level systems have traditionally required a PCI card, which meant carting a separate docking station or a PCI expansion system—either of which could

add as much as \$1,000 to your bottom line, and double your system's weight and bulk.

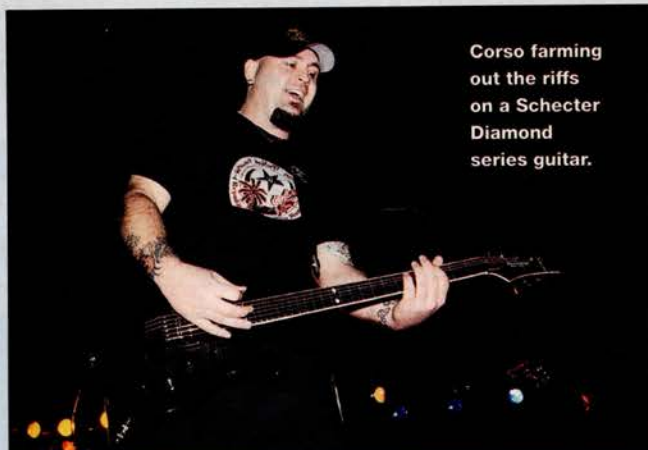
Among the 828's other features are eight channels of 24-bit analog inputs and outputs (including two XLR inputs with phantom power), MOTU's Audiodesk editing software for the Mac (an ASIO driver is included for use with Windows-based audio software), S/PDIF ins and outs, and 22 effects plug-ins (including reverb, flanging, chorus, ring modulation, and a mic preamp). The 1U 828 also supports MAS

> LIVE WIRES Alien Ant Farm

Alien Ant Farm's Terry Corso, developed his style by merging classic rock influences with hip-hop, pop, folk, and punk elements. To graft these influences onstage, Corso starts with three Schecter Diamond Series guitars—two 006 models and a C-1+ (given to him by Jerry Horton of Papa Roach). All guitars have a Seymour Duncan Distortion

humbucker in the bridge positions. In the neck position, the 006s have a Duncan Design SC-101 single coil, and the C-1+ has a Duncan Jazz humbucker. The guitars are strung with custom-gauged Dean Markley Blue Steels (.010, .013, .017, .030, .042, .052), and Corso strums with .60 mm Dunlop Tortex picks.

His stage rig consists of a



Corso farming out the riffs on a Schecter Diamond series guitar.



Alien amp hill: Corso's effects and wireless system sit atop a pair of Marshall heads.



Rear window: Corso's rack is as big as a fridge, with just as many compartments.



Corso's stompbox drawer.



Corso's Marshall 4x12 cabs and stage decoy.



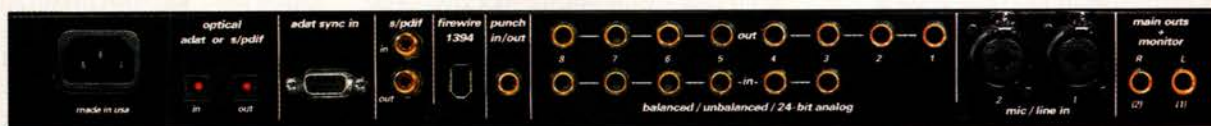
Corso's master controller pedal, tuner, and "alienated" wah.

modest array of components assembled in a custom rack built by Dave Friedman at Rack Systems Audio. Corso uses a Shure UHF wireless system to send signals to his rack, which houses a Furman PL-Plus power conditioner, a stompbox drawer, and two 100-watt Marshall heads—a stock JCM 2000 series DSL100 (for clean and distorted rhythm tones) and a modified JCM 800 series 2203 with KT88 power tubes (for fatter heavy tones). The DSL100 powers a straight-front Marshall 4x12 cab with Celestion Vintage 30 speakers, and the 2203 drives a Marshall

4x12 loaded with 75-watt Celestions. (Because the amps are not visible from the audience, Corso sets up a battery-powered baby Marshall stack as a decoy.)

Corso's bevy of stompboxes includes several Boss models (two CH-1 Choruses, a BF-2 Flanger, and an RV-3 Digital Reverb), two Axess Electronics pedal loops, and a Voodoo Lab Pedal Power unit. A modded CryBaby wah (it has no treadle), a Boss TU-2 Tuner, and an Axess Electronics master controller pedal occupy Corso's onstage pedalboard.

—LISA SHARKEN



and Adobe Premiere plug-ins, which means you can use digital tools such as Bomb Factory's SansAmp guitar preamp, Antares' mic modeler, and TC Works Native Bundle. Like

any digital-recording system, the 828's tracking and processing capabilities are only limited by the speed and power of your computer.

In short, MOTU's flinging the Firewire-au-

dio door open means that, you could feasibly carry your guitar, amp, and 828-based studio to your band's next jam and record it all live. Now *that* rules!

—SHAWN HAMMOND



TOOLBOX*

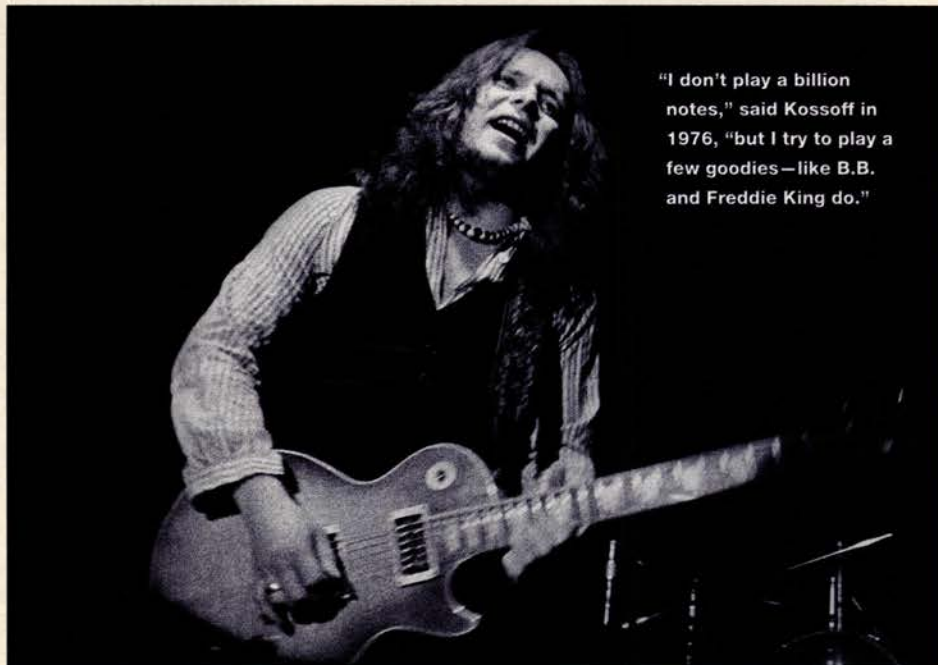
> > > ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

who recently won a Grammy in the "Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without Orchestra)" category for her *Dreams of a World* [Teldec]. In addition to being the first classical guitarist to take home a Grammy in 28 years, Isbin is the first female classical guitarist to capture the coveted award. As only three other guitar soloists have received Grammys (Andres Segovia, Laurindo Almeida, and Julian Bream), Isbin's achievement is a mighty one, indeed. . . . **THE**

BAD NEWS IS: Two guitar legends have been confirmed to be battling cancer. **George Harrison** underwent surgery at the Mayo Clinic in April to remove a cancerous growth in one of his lungs—four years after receiving two rounds of radiation therapy for throat cancer. The 58-year-old icon's recent procedure was, by all reports, completely successful. In a statement, Harrison's attorney said, "The operation was successful and George has made an excellent recovery. He is in the best of spirits and in top form." **Eddie Van Halen** also recently announced that he has been diagnosed with cancer. Although he declined to identify the type, last May he underwent cancer "prevention treatment" at a Houston hospital, where a spokesperson then denied reports that the 46-year-old guitar legend had tongue cancer. In a statement, Van Halen appeared confident, saying "I'm sorry for having waited so long to address this issue personally. But, cancer can be a very unique and private matter to deal with. So, I think it's about time to tell you where I'm at. I was examined by three

> HEROES Paul Kossoff



"I don't play a billion notes," said Kossoff in 1976, "but I try to play a few goodies—like B.B. and Freddie King do."

A frail elf with a huge sound and one of the most sensual vibratos ever, Paul Kossoff was just 18 when he joined vocalist Paul Rodgers in Free. The guitarist's fondness for slow-burn solos and bratty chords brought the band worldwide success, and ensured that its 1970 show-stopper "All Right Now" became one of rock music's enduring classics.

"Paul taught me how to enhance a voice, blues-wise," revealed Kossoff in a July 1976 *GP* interview completed just months before his fatal heart attack on March 19, 1976. "I hate to just play solos. I prefer to hear his voice and back it up, rip around it, or push it—without covering it over. My style and his grew up together."

Unfortunately, the two Brit-rock greats were not destined to *finish* together. Free broke up in 1973, Rodgers formed the fabulously successful Bad Company, and Kossoff languished commercially in Back Street Crawler.

With Free, Kossoff relied on a '57 sunburst Les Paul Standard, a Marshall 100-watt head, and a homemade 4x12 cabinet that his father helped build. Later, the rig was replaced with a 100-watt Marshall half-stack. His final Back Street Crawler setup was dubbed "The Enterprise," and it included two Marshall 100-watt heads and a custom Marshall cabinet loaded with eight 12" Celestions designed for bass systems.

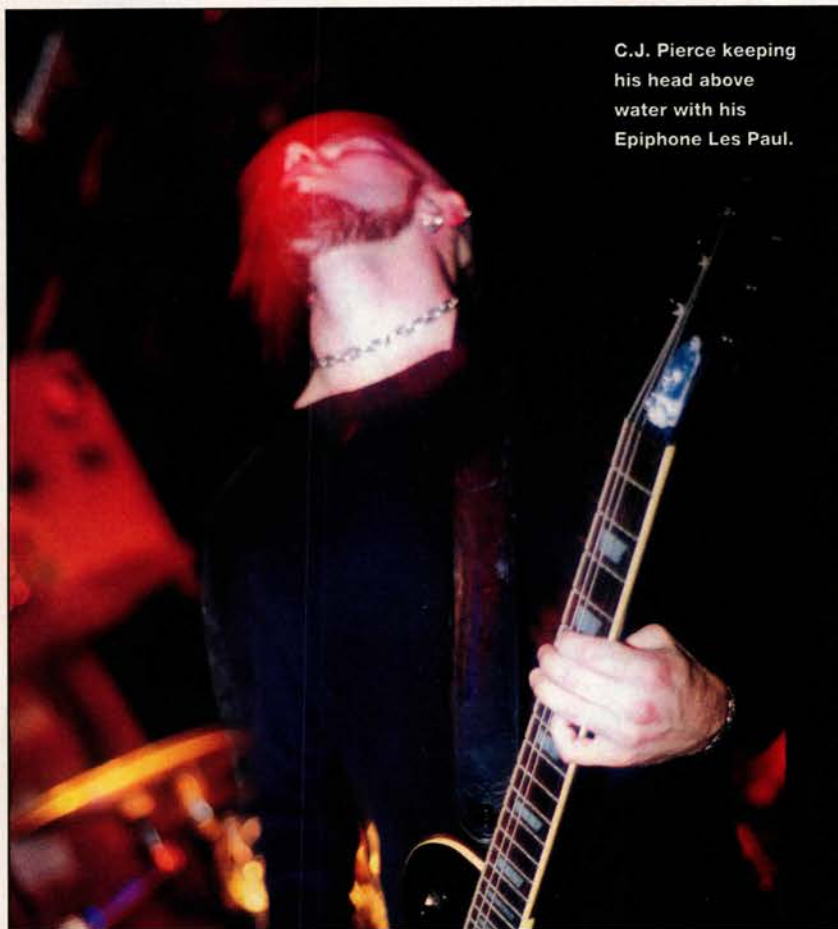
"I don't like a lot of top end," he explained. "The bass speakers give me a nice, round sound without rasp."

Kossoff's signature rhythm style was often voiced by chord forms that did not resolve as major or minor. "I use a lot of open strings, and I prefer to use a chord that rings out without having either major or minor dominance," he said. "For example, when I play a G chord, I'll press down a D on the fifth string, a G on the fourth string, leave the third string open, and then fret a D on the second string and a G on the first. This shape can be moved up to a C [8th fret], a D [10th fret], or an F [13th fret]. I'll also play an A chord with my little finger holding down an A on the sixth string, leave the fifth string ringing open, and then fret an E on the fourth string, and an A on the third."

After abandoning his childhood classical-guitar lessons, Kossoff was drawn back to the instrument when he saw Eric Clapton perform with John Mayall—at a club gig where the audience shouted, "God! God!" as Clapton played. Further inspired by Peter Green, B.B. King, and Freddie King—as well as soul icons Otis Redding and Ray Charles—Kossoff forged his approach on pure emotion.

"My style is still very primitive," he said. "But I do my best to express myself and move people at the same time."

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA



C.J. Pierce keeping his head above water with his Epiphone Les Paul.

C.J. Pierce and his ultra-heavy, Dallas-based band Drowning Pool knew they were on their way three years ago when they landed tour slots with Sevendust, Kittie, and Hed (pe). Two years later, the band cut a demo that put them in Top 10 rotation on Dallas' premier hard rock station, KEGF. Next thing the band knew, they were signed to Wind-Up records, their first single "Bodies" was in Buzzworthy rotation on MTV, and they had won a spot on the 2001 Ozzfest tour.

• • • • •

Did you have to make any big adjustments to your sound when you went from playing smaller venues to bigger ones?

Here's a big lesson I learned recently: Before we started this tour, our sound guy said, "Your rig sounds really good, but you have to remember that people are hearing what's coming out of the P.A.—not what's coming out of your amp." Then he took me out front to listen to my sound, and I noticed my low end was muddy, and the highs were too trebly. So I went back and tweaked my presets. After that, when I listened to my sound right out of the 4x12 cabinets,

it didn't suck, but it didn't sound like what I want. But when I listened to the guitar through the P.A., it sounded *massive*. Now I have dual presets for every song—one for smaller, non-P.A. venues, and one for places with sound systems.

Which frequencies did you find yourself boosting or attenuating for the P.A.?

I don't like that mid-heavy, old-school tone. I prefer that big *shug*—the modern metal sound with lots of highs and lows. But I did find that boosting the mids made my guitar cut through the mix better. You just have to be careful—if you boost the mids too much, you lose that modern sound.

What does your rig consist of?

It's pretty basic. I play an Epiphone Les Paul with OBL humbuckers. My guitar goes through a Shure wireless to a DigiTech 2112 preamp, a Vox wah, and a DigiTech Whammy pedal. My amp is a 300-watt Mesa/Boogie Coliseum that I run in stereo through two Boogie 4x12 cabinets with Celestion Vintage 30s. A stereo rig gives you a fatter sound, and, because we're just a one-guitar band, I do whatever I can to fill up the void!

—SHAWN HAMMOND

* STUDIO LOG



Tracking "sparkleStar"

Album: *how 'bout this?* by Bubble

Part: solo

Guitarist: Share Ross

Guitar: Epiphone Custom Shop Les Paul

Amp: Marshall half-stack

Effects: none

Strings: D'Addario .011s

Tuning: "Keith Richards" 5-string, open-G ("I wanted to get away from knowing where I was on the neck all the time, and write more by ear," says Ross of adopting open-G tuning.)

Recording Chain: Bam, Bubble's drummer and album co-producer (as well as Ross' songwriting partner), positioned a Shure SM57 off-axis to one of the Marshall 4x12 speakers, and compressed the signal "just a little" with a dbx 166.

Creative Concept: "We wanted the rhythm track and solo to have that huge, Led Zeppelin rock sound," says Ross. "Bam and I sketched out the solo by singing parts to each other while listening to the basic tracks. Then we turned the amp up to 10, and I went for it. We wanted the solo to end with a bendy thing. For that part, I decided you don't always have to play notes—sometimes it's cool to just lift your fingers off the strings and let the noise take over."

—MICHAEL MOLENDY

WEB RIFF

Hear "sparkleStar," the 2000 John Lennon Songwriting Contest "Song of the Year," by clicking the Soundpage at **guitarplayer.com**.

TOOLBOX*

>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

oncologists, and three head-and-neck surgeons at Cedars Sinai just before spring break, and I was told that I'm healthier than ever and beating cancer. Although it's hard to say when, there's a good chance I will be cancer-free in the near future. I just want to thank all of you for your concern and support." . . . **CARS AND GUITARS:** The Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles has just opened



Billy Gibbons' 1948 CadZilla custom Cadillac with a purple prototype American Showster guitar and Steve Vai's original "Flame Gem".

one of its largest exhibits ever, **Cars & Guitars of Rock 'N' Roll**, commemorating 50 years since Jackie Brenston's "Rocket 88" (which featured Ike Turner on guitar) hit the airwaves. Thirty-five cars—including one of **Brian Setzer's** Ford hot rods, a bright red '32 hot rod that belongs to **Jeff Beck**, **Eric Clapton's** 1940 Ford, and **Elvis Presley's** 1976 Cadillac El Dorado—and more than 75 guitars and other rock memorabilia will be shown through December 31. For more info, check out www.petersen.org. —EMILY FASTEN

> PAWNSHOP PRIZE Hofner 176

During the guitar boom of the 1960s, Germany's Hofner company helped satisfy demand here and abroad with its Fender-inspired alternatives to costlier Strats, Jaguars, and Jazzmasters. One such instrument is this late-'60s model 176, which features three pickups, a two-tone sunburst finish, enclosed tuners, a bound neck, and a distinctive, spatula-like trem. The chunky bridge (which originally incorporated a string dampener) is only adjustable for intonation, and you have to pull the strings away from the clear-plastic saddles in order to manually slide the saddles forward or backward.

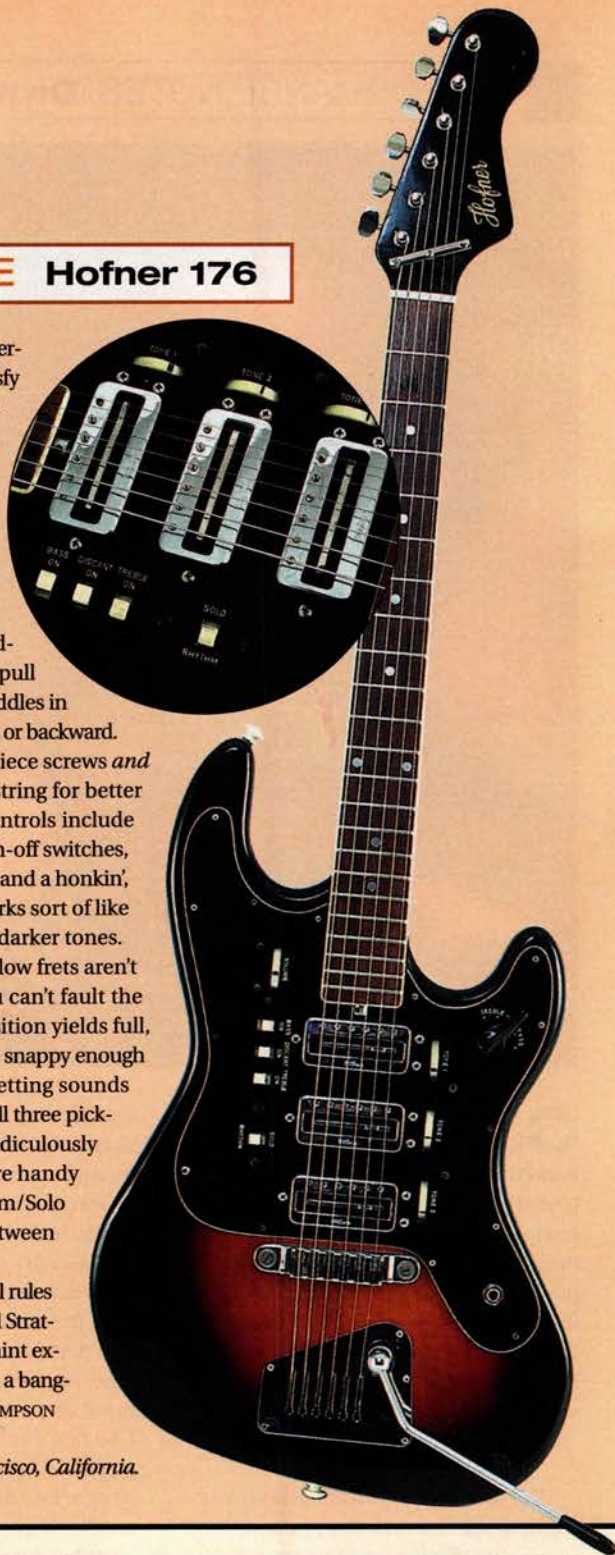
Each pickup sports adjustable polepiece screws and a blade, which is notched under the B-string for better balance when using a wound G. The controls include three tone thumbwheels, three pickup on-off switches, a master volume, a Rhythm/Solo switch, and a honkin', 5-position Treble-o-Bass switch that works sort of like a Gibson Varitone to yield brighter and darker tones.

Though its thin neck and extremely low frets aren't the ideal setup for bluesy bending, you can't fault the 176's tough, ballsy sound. The neck position yields full, crisp rhythm tones, the middle position is snappy enough for lead, and the fat-sounding bridge setting sounds cool for solos and crunch rhythm. With all three pickups on at once, the distortion sound is ridiculously thick. The individual on-off switches are handy for creating stutter effects, and the Rhythm/Solo switch provides a quick way to toggle between two volume settings.

Ahead of its time in the '60s, the 176 still rules for its styling, over-the-top electronics, and Strat-meets-Les Paul Junior tones. This near-mint example is currently priced at \$300, so it's still a bang-for-buck champ, too.

—ART THOMPSON

Guitar courtesy of Real Guitars in San Francisco, California.



> LEARNING CURVE JustEnough Box Set

The *JustEnough* guitar method (\$49) is one of the coolest beginning guitar courses to come out in a long time. To start off, pop in the course's 15-minute video, which follows Andrew—the 16-year-old lead guitarist for the Blue Tones—as he discusses buying gear, forming a band, getting gigs, and other topics. The video also includes a "live" tune from the teenaged Blue Tones, and although

overdubs are evident, it's clear the kids are bona fide players—pretty motivational for young beginners.

From there, flip open the 50-page instruction booklet. The lessons—which correspond to tracks on the included audio CD—are extremely thorough, and range from ultra-basics (parts of the guitar, tuning, fretting, holding the pick, etc.) to more involved concepts (chords and scales, bends,



"Record companies often release a list of artists who need songs to publishers," reveals Salas. "But sometimes artists who fancy themselves songwriters don't know they're on these lists, and they get really pissed!"

Stevie Salas hit the big time soon after graduating from high school in 1988. He began writing music for films (his first was the blockbuster comedy *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*), and joined Rod Stewart's road band as lead guitarist. Since then, he has written and performed for artists as varied as George Clinton, Terence Trent D'Arby, Sass Jordan, Glenn Hughes, and Jeff Healey. He is currently working on a solo album.

—SHAWN HAMMOND

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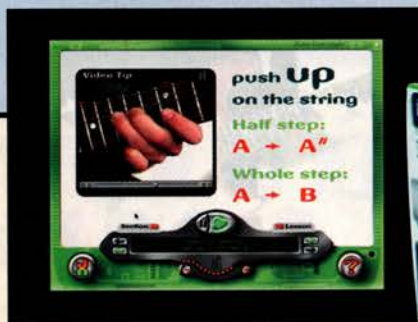
"If you want to have a long career as a songwriter, you have to be a little bit afraid of what you're doing," says Salas. "When you write a bad song, it becomes a personal stamp of who you are. It sticks with

you, and sometimes you pay the price. I know that sounds dramatic, but it's true. I'd rather sit under a tree or go surfing than write music I don't feel is really important.

"Songwriting is hard work, and you have to have patience. I'm not like a lot of professional songwriters who sit down every day and say, 'I'm going to write a song.' There are also a lot of guys who analyze what's popular on the radio, and craft a song that's pretty much a cookie-cutter copy of a current hit. I don't do any of that. I can't craft a song from a formula. And I never write a song unless I have a vehicle for it—like a solo album or somebody else's record. Luckily, I've been successful at finding artists I like who need a song, because there's nothing more painful than writing a great tune that will never be released."

hammer-ons, vibrato, etc.). The CD also features eight songs you can jam along with.

When you want more, load the CD-ROM (PC and Mac) into your computer and explore theory, songwriting, and gear in greater detail. The interface lets you control playback, skip between lessons, and seek help. If *that's* not enough, surf to justenough.net for more lessons, gear reviews, chat rooms, message boards, and contests. As a comprehensive guitar course for fledgling 6-stringers, *JustEnough* is a multimedia extravaganza



anza and a butt-kicking bargain!

JustEnough, Box S-3551, Carmel, CA 93921; (831) 624-9100; justenough.net.

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Marshall **VALVESTATE** AVT

New Gear

By Emily Fasten



1

1. PEAVEY

Peavey gets nasty with the 120-watt, mudflap girl-sporting Triple XXX amp (\$1,200). The three-channel amp features a clean channel with volume, bass, mid, and treble controls, and crunch and lead channels that each have Bottom (bass), Body (mid), Hair (treble), and volume and gain controls. The Triple XXX can use either EL34s or 6L6GC

power tubes, and comes equipped with a master volume and a line output with a level control. **Peavey**, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; (601) 483-5365; peavey.com.

2. JON KAMMERER GUITARS

Jon Kammerer's new line of acoustics (base price, \$987) features an ergonomic shape that helps reduce fatigue, and

is available in a variety of woods, including maple, mahogany, walnut, purpleheart, and cherry. Other options include an onboard amplification system (with a pickup, a preamp, and a volume control), a single cutaway, and a range of colors and inlay choices. **Jon Kammerer Guitars**, 222 Timea St., Keokuk, IA 52632; (319) 526-7651; jonkammererguitars.com.



2



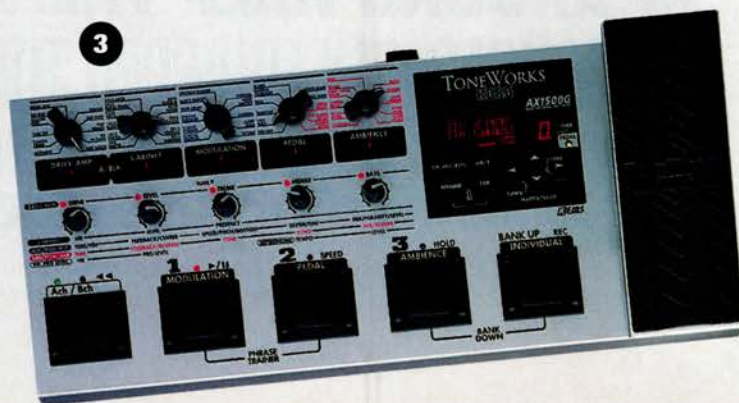
ARIA

The Sinsonido AS-490S (\$539) is a portable, 9-volt-battery-powered electric that weighs just over 4 lbs. Made of hard maple, the AS-490S has a three-piece frame, a full-size neck with an adjustable trussrod, and separate volume and tone controls. The guitar also comes with headphones and a padded carrying case. **Aria USA**, 9244 Commerce Highway, Pennsauken, NJ 08110; (856) 663-8900; ariausa.com.

3. KORG

Korg's AX1500G Modeling Signal Processor (\$375) has a red-on-black LCD display, 96 presets (48 user/48 factory), and 56 effects. Each program features two footswitchable drive pedals, and you can select a

specific amp/cabinet setting for each channel within a program. Eight of the 56 effects types (including distortion, chorus, flanger, and ring modulator, to name a few) can be used at once, and the expression pedal allows real-time



3



LEXICON

The MPX 200 (\$400) is a true-stereo, 24-bit, dual-channel processor with S/PDIF inputs and outputs, and a digital compressor. The MPX 200 features 240 presets, including reverb (ambience, plate, chamber, and inverse), tremolo, rotary speaker, chorus, flanger, pitch shift, detune, delay (up to 5.5 seconds), and echo. The processor also offers 64 user programs, and allows two independent effects in a variety of configurations. Up to eight adjustable parameters are available in each program. **Lexicon**, 3 Oak Park, Bedford, MA 01730; (781) 280-0490; lexicon.com.

control of 11 effects. A Sample & Play function lets you loop and reverse loop up to eight seconds of recorded audio, and the Phrase Trainer records up to 16 seconds of audio and can slow it down as much as 75 percent without changing pitch. The AX1500G also has 1/4" and stereo mini jacks for input and output, as well as a built-in metronome and a chromatic tuner. **Korg**, 316 South Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747; (516) 333-9100; korg.com.

4. HEARTWOODES

Heartwoodes guitar straps



(\$50-\$70) are made from a variety of exotic, polymer-coated hardwoods, including rosewood, maple, mahogany, chocolate rosewood, coca bola, and two-tone coca bola (pictured).

Made in Costa Rica from scraps of harvested lumber, Heartwoodes are adjustable, and are secured with 200-lb, test-braided nylon line. **Heartwoodes**, Box 263220, Daytona Beach, FL 32126; (904) 238-1880; heartwoodes.com.

GOOGALIES

The Googalies microfiber cloth (\$12) was originally developed for high-end optics, but also cleans musical instruments without scratching or leaving lint. The machine-

washable, polyester-and-nylon fabric is 16" x 16," and needs no chemical solvents or oils.

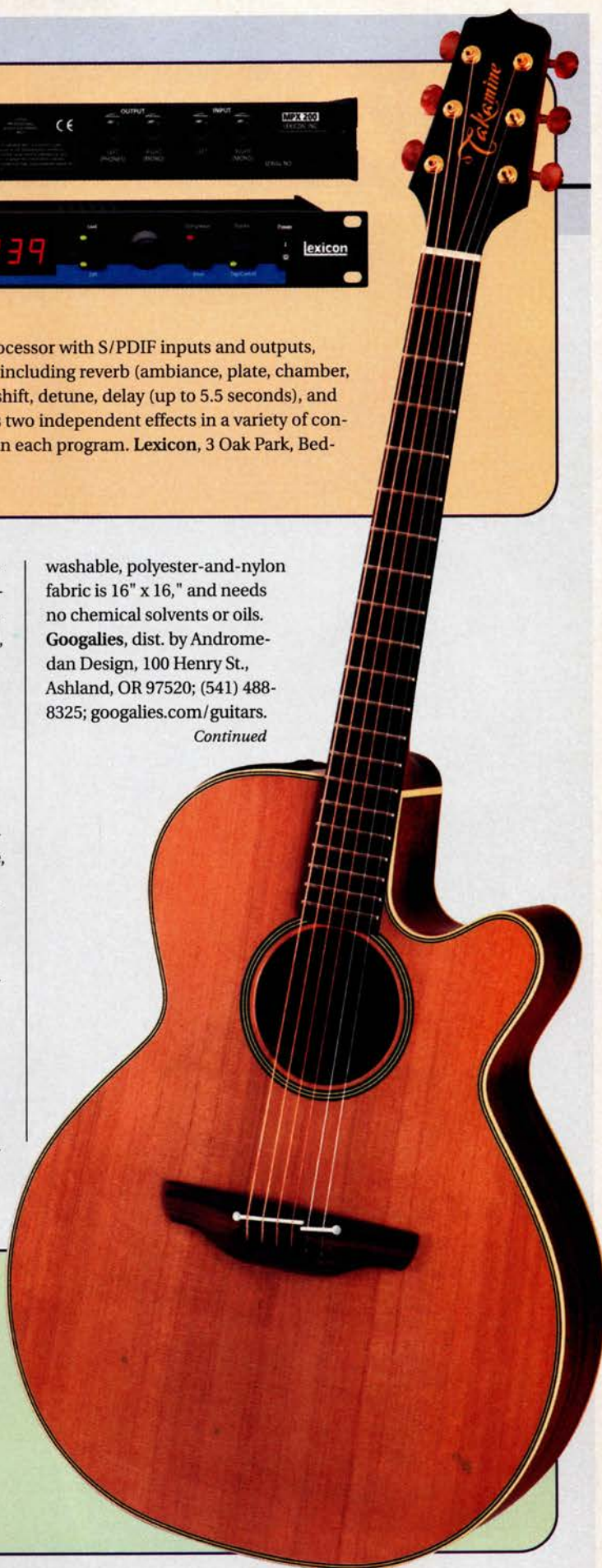
Googalies, dist. by Andromedan Design, 100 Henry St., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 488-8325; googalies.com/guitars.

Continued

TAKAMINE

Takamine's Advanced Natural series (model EAN40C, \$1,150, is pictured) features solid cedar tops and satin finished mahogany backs and necks. The guitars also offer stained-basswood rosettes and body binding, rosewood fretboards, and gold machine heads with pearl buttons. The series includes the Dreadnought, NEX, Jumbo, Classic, FXC fingerstyle, and a 12-string.

Takamine, dist. by Kaman Music, 20 Old Windsor Rd., Bloomfield, CT 06002; (860) 509-8888; kamanmusic.com.

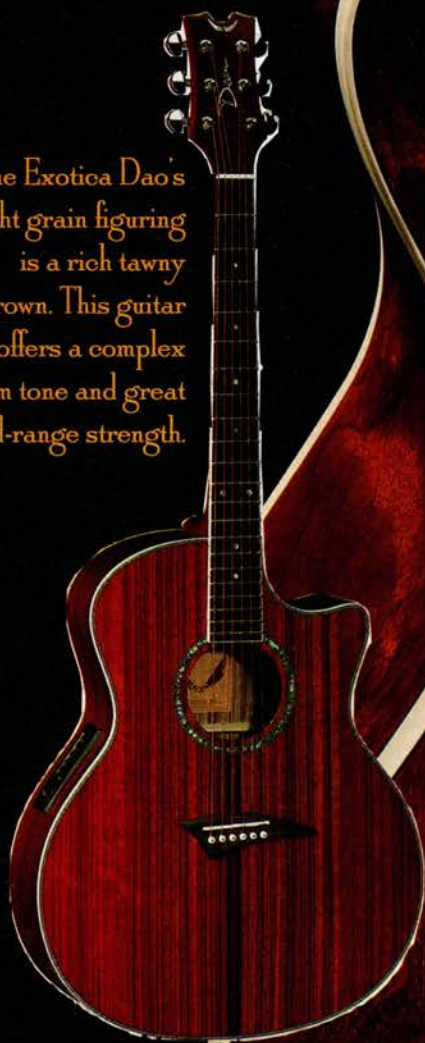




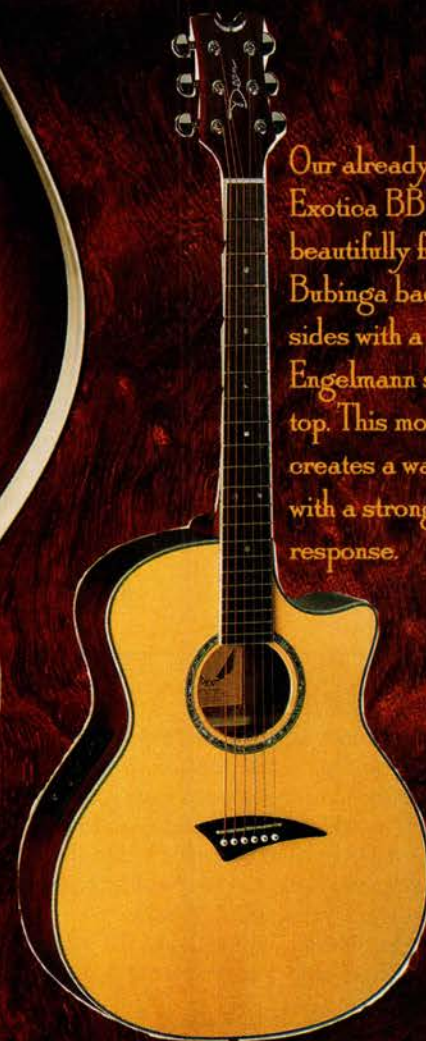
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New Gear



5

5. FRAMUS

The Ruby Riot combo (\$2,700) is a 30-watt, hand-wired, class A combo with two 12" Celestion speakers (a Vintage 30 and a Greenback G12). Available in either red or black, the Riot includes an Accutronics spring reverb, two footswitchable channels, and a parallel effects loop. **Framus**, dist. by Dana B. Goods, 1669 Callens

Rd., Ventura, CA 93003; (805) 644-6621; danabgoods.com.

6. YAMAHA

The GigMaker Electric (\$429) includes an ERG121 electric guitar, a GA10 10-watt amp, and a YT150 tuner—as well as a gigbag, a strap, strings, a string-winder, and picks. The ERG121 has a solid basswood

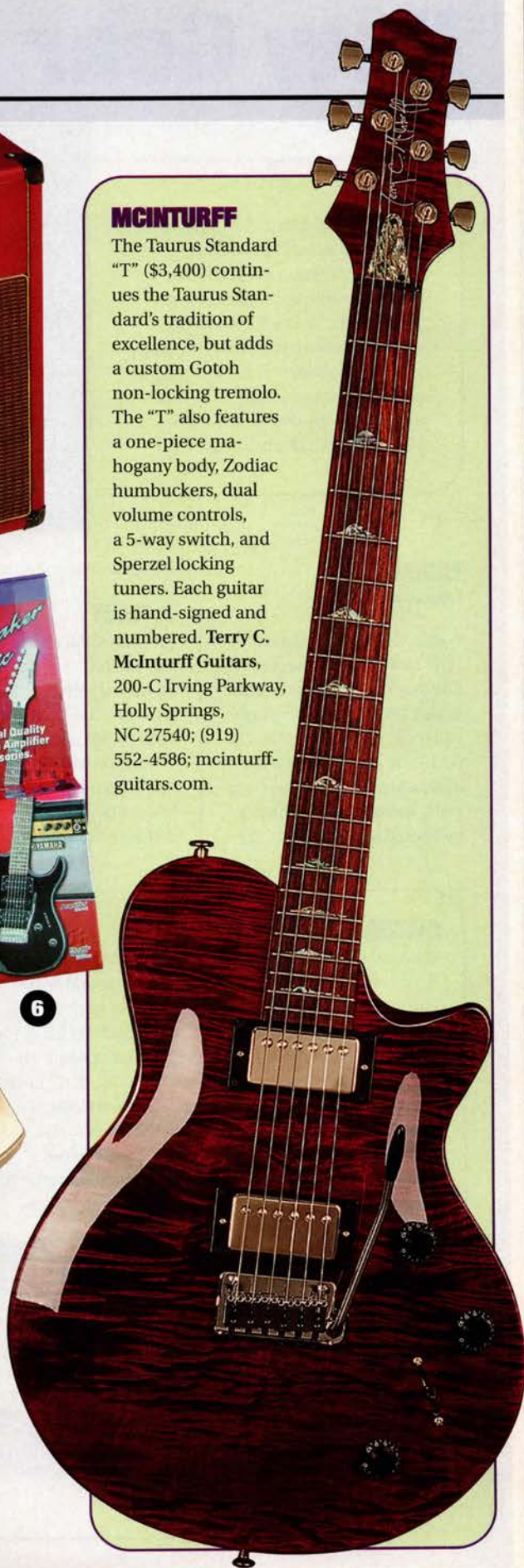
Continued on page 34



6

MCINTURFF

The Taurus Standard "T" (\$3,400) continues the Taurus Standard's tradition of excellence, but adds a custom Gotoh non-locking tremolo. The "T" also features a one-piece mahogany body, Zodiac humbuckers, dual volume controls, a 5-way switch, and Sperzel locking tuners. Each guitar is hand-signed and numbered. **Terry C. McInturff Guitars**, 200-C Irving Parkway, Holly Springs, NC 27540; (919) 552-4586; mcinturff-guitars.com.



ZOOM

Zoom returns to the analog stompbox world with four new distortion pedals (\$165 each). The PD-01 Power Drive has warm, fat sustain, active EQ, and a circuit design that boosts your signal while filtering out harmonics that could thin your sound. The TM-01 Tri Metal uses a three-stage, cascading-gain circuit to accentuate heavy phrases—which means it's well suited for low-register and 7-string voicings. The HL-01 Hyper Lead boasts aggressive tones that are hyped up for stinging solos. The UF-01 Ultra Fuzz goes for lo-fi tones and features Color, Tone, and Reso controls. All pedals have status LEDs, and gain, level, and tone controls. **Zoom**, dist. by Samson Technologies, Box 9031, Syosset, NY 11791; (516) 364-2882; samsonotech.com.

New Gear

AKAI

Akai's new Hexacomp C2M (\$300), a 6-band compressor pedal, lets you apply compression to specific frequencies, while leaving others untouched. The G-Drive D2G (\$300) is an analog distortion pedal with separate 6-band graphic EQs for the input and output signals. Akai, 4710 Mercantile Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76137; (817) 831-9203; akaipro.com.



YAMAHA

Continued from page 33

body, a maple neck, a vintage-style tremolo, chrome tuners, humbuckers in the neck and bridge positions, and a single-coil pickup in the middle. The GA10 amp has a 6" speaker, and treble, mid, and bass controls. Yamaha, Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622; (714) 522-

9011; yamahaguitars.com.

7. NADY

Nady introduces two 12AT7-equipped tube studio mics: the TCM 1050 (\$500) and the TCM 1100 (\$530). The 1050 has a 1" Mylar diaphragm, a dedicated AC power



7

supply, and nine remotely switchable pickup patterns (omnidirectional, cardioid, figure 8, and six intermediate stages). The 1050 comes with a 30' XLR cable, an elastic shockmount, and a foam windscreen. The 1100, a cardioid mic with a 1.1" gold-sputtered Mylar diaphragm, includes a 16' XLR cable and a TMPS-1 power supply. Both mics come with a

carrying case. Nady Systems, 6701 Shellmound St., Emeryville, CA 94608; (510) 652-2411; nadywireless.com.

New Gear is based on info from manufacturers. Coverage does not imply endorsement by Guitar Player. All prices and specs are subject to change. Manufacturers: Submit your press release and photo with list price information to New Gear, Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403.

Ovation

The new Celebrity Deluxe Doubleneck (\$1,700) is the most recent addition to Ovation's line of roundbacks. The acoustic/electric features a 12-string neck on top, and a 6-string on the bottom. A 3-way switch allows you to toggle between necks, or have both on at once. The Deluxe has a $3/4$ -size rounded back, $25\frac{1}{4}$ "-scale necks, rosewood fretboards and bridges, gold hardware, Ovation Thinline pickups, and a modified OP24 Plus preamp. The finish is Black Cherry Burst. Ovation, dist. by Kaman Music, 20 Old Windsor Rd., Bloomfield, CT 06002; (860) 509-8888; kamanmusic.com.





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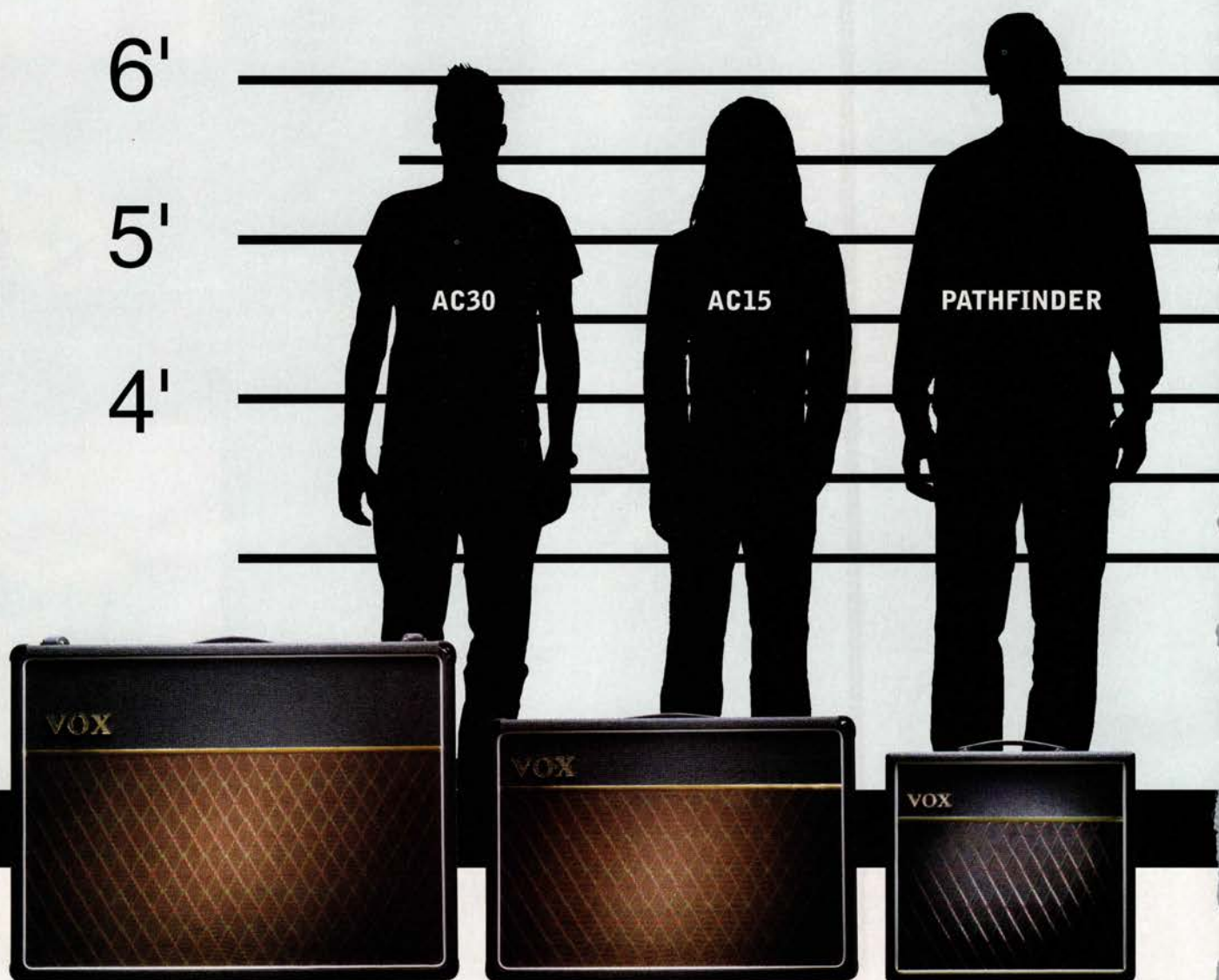
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WHAT A



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AC15 TOP BOOST

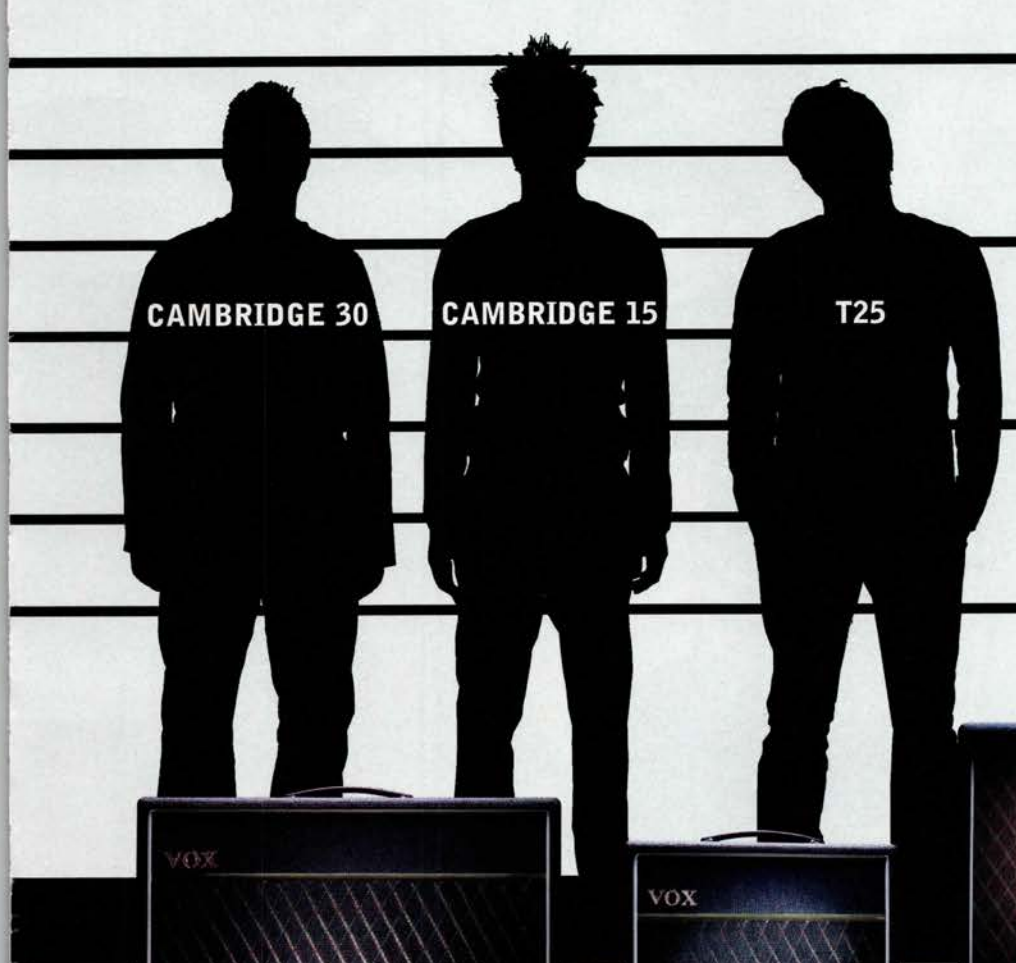
- 15 Watt, 1x12, "Class A" combo with Tremolo
- 4 x ECC83 preamp valves with High and Low inputs
- 5Y3 rectifier, 1 x ECC83, 2 x EL84 power section valves
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T25

6'

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Dave Navarro

Keeping it Fresh

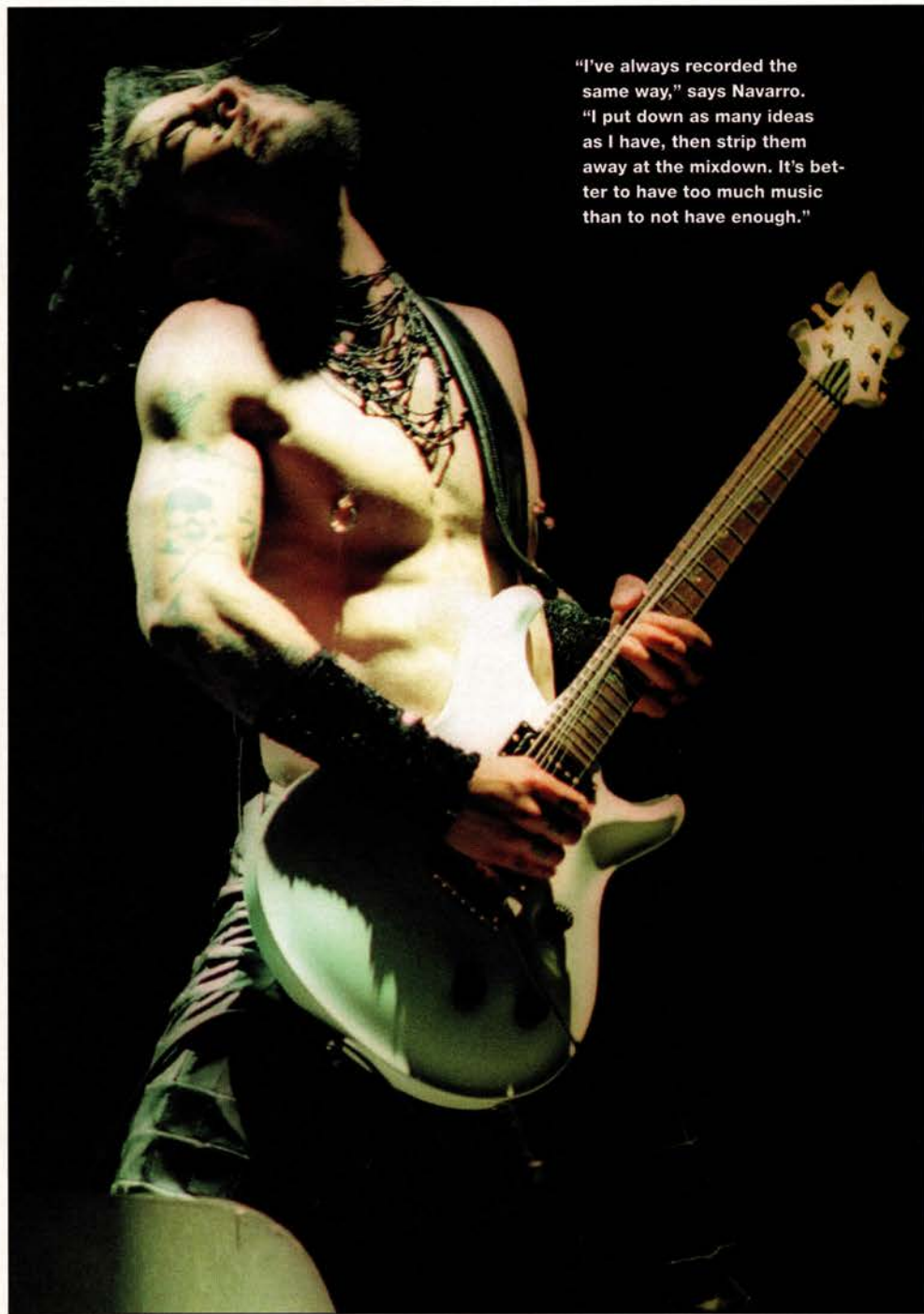
By Adam Levy

"I've always been a fan of music where you can hear new things each time you listen," says Dave Navarro. "I grew up listening to albums by Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and Jimi Hendrix, and they all worked on that multi-layered level."

Not surprisingly, Navarro's new disc, *Trust No One* [Capitol], is what you might call a "head-phone album." It's packed with dozens of intriguing guitar parts that sneak in and out of the mix. Navarro's alt-rock solo debut may not sound much like his aforementioned heroes—nor does it closely resemble the music he created with Jane's Addiction and the Red Hot Chili Peppers—but the influence of Floyd and Zeppelin is evident in Navarro's collage concept.

"The original versions of the songs were stripped down, raw, and human," he says. "I tracked the basics with Chad [Smith, Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer], and we essentially built a skeleton. Then I imported the skeleton into Pro Tools, and took the skeleton away. I edited the basic song structures, and then a lot of the rhythm tracks got *replayed* to the new arrangements."

The nonlinear process



"I've always recorded the same way," says Navarro. "I put down as many ideas as I have, then strip them away at the mixdown. It's better to have too much music than to not have enough."

wasn't the easiest way to work, Navarro admits, but it helped him stay stoked about his pro-

ject. "All of the songs had been sitting around a while before I recorded them, and they had

lost their *emotional* charm," he says. "The intellectual part of

Continued on page 44

electro-harmonix

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Placebo

Brian Molko's Glam-Bam Guitars

By Michael Molenda

I'm a big believer in ineptitude," says Placebo's Brian Molko. "You have to make a great deal of mistakes to develop a personal style—you play the wrong notes, and they turn out to be the *right* notes."

Although he tags himself as the "complete opposite" of technically obsessed guitarists such as Yngwie Malmsteen, Molko is not simply posturing to rationalize shoddy chops. Formed in London with an Englishman (Molko), an American (drummer Steve Hewitt), and a Swede (bassist/multi-instrumentalist Stefan Olsdal), Placebo has always challenged musical formulas, gender politics, and cultural stereotypes. (Molko has been known to exploit his androgenous look by walking onstage in drag.) True to form, the band's new album, *Black Market Music* [Virgin], was not forged from a cohesive creative concept.

"We have a very instinctual approach," says Molko. "There isn't a great deal of calculation involved. We experiment until we find something that feels right, and then the emotion of the song will be dictated by the emotion of the music. It's quite simple. We don't even have defined roles within the band. We haven't



"For me, the guitar is simply a tool that allows you to express yourself to the world," says Molko. "It's just a means to write a song."

Placebo

decided that I can only play guitar, or Stefan can only play bass—anybody can play anything. And we don't consciously pick the songs that are the best selections for the album, either. They pick themselves—they kind of put themselves together like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle."

Placebo's commitment to freedom and anarchy is rare in a pop field that expects proven performers to churn out stylistically recognizable—and commercially seductive—fare until the market for a particular sound and/or look crumbles. And the building blocks of the Placebo sound are vastly more diverse than the glam genre into which many critics pigeonhole the band.

"We haven't even decided what we sound like," counters Molko. "As far as we're concerned, if we respond emotionally, instinctually, and positively to music, we'll keep it—regardless of whether it's a piano-driven ballad, a fierce punk song, a melancholy ambient feel, or a hip-hop tune. If we get off on it, *then* it's the Placebo sound. You see, we have a very nonjudgmental approach to what music is. We're lovers of music with a capital 'M.' But what we learned is, while it's important to digest your influences, it's not necessary to wear them on your sleeve."

Although the band hasn't helped its stylistic case by being cast in the 1998 film *Velvet Goldmine*—which was a valentine to Britain's '70s glam scene—or its close relationship to David Bowie, Molko's early influences include defiantly uncommercial, aural troublemakers such as Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca, and Rhys Chatham.

"Sonic Youth changed my life when I was 16," says Molko. "They gave me a love for dissonance—which can be quite beautiful—and that's the sound that pulled me into the guitar. I'd ask myself, 'How the hell did they get those sounds?' And, of course, I tried to copy them, and I did it so badly that I ended up sounding like me."

In addition to picking up alternate tunings from listening to Sonic Youth, Molko has developed a few "secret" tunings of his own, and even learned a few riffs from Chatham himself when he joined the New York composer's 100-guitar symphony. "For one of his pieces, we'd tune every string to the same note," says Molko.

Even though Placebo abhors formulas, there is one tenet the band *always* follows—that every creative decision must be unanimous. "The end product is the most important thing," says Molko. "Your pathetic little rock star ego is completely insignificant. You should only aspire to the honest communication of

emotion—not to be a technical virtuoso and show off. I don't need my guitar to masturbate, thank you!"

Black Market Gear

Guitars: Gibson SG, and Fender Telecaster, Jaguar, Jazzmaster, and Bass VI.

Amps: Mesa/Boogie combo, Marshall 4x12 cabinet, Fender Twin. ("The Fender delivers the bite," says Molko, "and the Boogie/Marshall combination adds depth. It's the fattest sound possible—the biggest chunk.")

Effects: Boss delay, Electro-Harmonix Micro Synth.

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with his Taylor.**

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to say to the salesman,
“No thanks, just lookin’.”**



Dave Navarro

Continued from page 39

being in the studio helped maintain my excitement. For me, there are three aspects to music making: the emotional, the intellectual, and the physical. The emotional is the initial spark of creation, the intellectual is the process of documentation, and the physical part is the performance. If I can take a song through that journey, the different aspects of the creative process will keep it fresh."

Navarro also sparked his creativity by trying alternate tunings. "The tuning I used most often was D, A, D, A, A, D," he says. "I played in that tuning on 'Rexall,' 'Mourning Son,' and 'Hungry.' The two As [second and third strings] give you weird resonances—you can play the same two notes on those strings, and they're always slightly out of tune with each other."

Pro Tools manipulations also helped keep fresh ideas circulating—such as the pulsing, hypnotic drone that appears at the start of Navarro's "Sunny Day" solo. "That part was created by playing one-note stabs through my wah pedal, and repeating the stabs through a digital-delay pedal," he says. "Then I manipulated the riff in Pro Tools to make it fit the song just right. Why spend an hour or two trying to play a part machine-perfect when a ma-

chine can do it for you?"

Although Navarro tracked his overdubs with effects, he doesn't necessarily recommend committing to a sound early in the recording process. "At the mixdown, there were times when I re-

alized I was married to an effect that I really wished I could change," he admits. "But it's easy to obsess over all the little details in the studio. I'd sometimes have to remind myself, 'Hey, it's just a rock song—let's move on!'"

Trustworthy Gear

Navarro's main guitar is his white Paul Reed Smith Custom 24, but he used several other electrics while recording *Trust No One*—Guilds, Gretsches, and assorted vintage Fenders. "During overdubs, I'd pick up whatever looked interesting at the moment, or whichever guitar I hadn't played yet," says Navarro. "I liked having such a broad palette to dip into."

Navarro's effects chain includes a Jim Dunlop Jimi Hendrix CryBaby, a Boss Super Phaser, a Boss CE-2 chorus, and two Boss DD-5 digital delays. One DD-5 is on the floor, set to a medium-slow rate with a gradual decay. ("I step on that one for solos—especially when I'm the only guitar player—because it fills up more space.") The other delay sits on a homemade stand, which Navarro keeps within arm's reach so he can manipulate the knobs for random, twinky effects on the fly.

While tracking *Trust No One*, Navarro fired up a host of Marshall, Bogner, Vox, and Matchless amps. Live, he uses two Marshall JCM 900 heads—one for clean sounds, the other for dirty—with an A/B box to toggle between them. The heads drive four Marshall cabinets. The bottom two cabs carry clean tones, and the top two are for overdrive sounds. "I don't want the clean sound blaring at my head," Navarro says. "But I do want to feel the immediacy of the overdriven stuff, so they're at ear level."

—AL

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Ronnie Montrose

It's Gamma Time

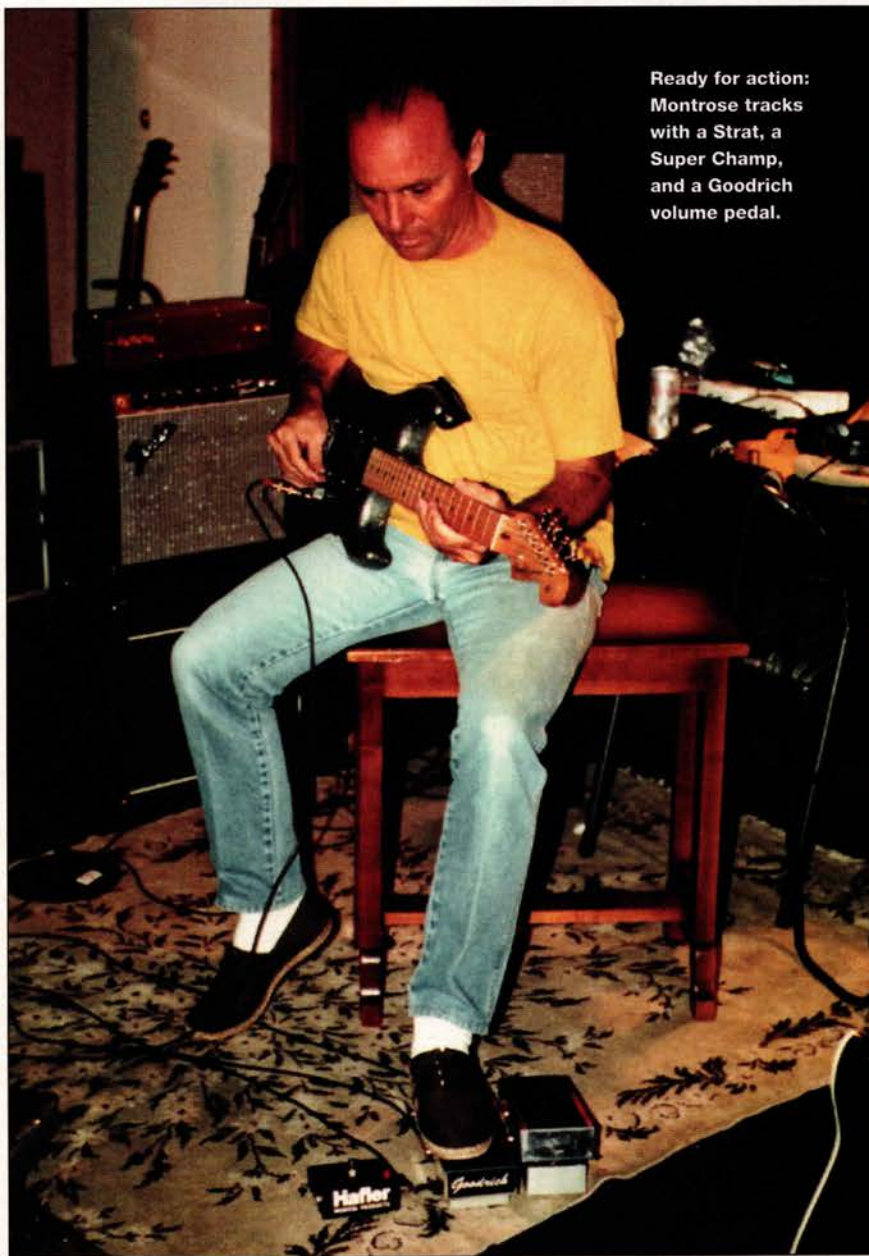
By Matt Blackett

"It wouldn't have been possible to do this record after *Gamma 3* in 1983," says Ronnie Montrose of the 18-year hiatus of his groundbreaking band. "Back then, the music wasn't there, the vibe wasn't there, and everyone was doing different things. We don't get to control the cosmic clock, but, this time around, all the factors coincided. Timing is everything."

Montrose has found himself in the right place at the right time on more than one occasion in his career. He got his start backing Van Morrison and Edgar Winter at a time when each artist was cutting a pivotal album. When he formed his own band in 1973, Montrose's heavy riffing and arena-rocking songs found an enthusiastic public, and his eponymous debut album influenced and inspired guitarists such as Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads. In 1979, the notoriously eclectic Montrose shifted gears and formed Gamma—a forward-thinking rock juggernaut that featured spacey synth textures, bluesy vocals, and vicious shred guitar. But after only three albums, Gamma broke up—presumably for good.

Cut to the present. *Gamma 4* [available at ronnieland.com] gives Montrose's fans a long overdue fix of the guitar/synth interplay that fueled Gamma's first three releases. The pyrotechnic solos of the earlier albums, however, have been replaced with a more thoughtful, laid-back approach.

"The first priority was the song," explains Montrose. "I didn't go in thinking I would make every tune a guitar-solo tour de force. I cut the solos live when we were recording



the basic tracks, but then I overdubbed new solos in my home studio. However, I did listen to my initial solos for direction, because they documented what the band had inspired me to play in the first place."

To cut the basic tracks, Montrose relied on a Fender Super Champ and a Mesa/Boo-

gie Maverick. "I sometimes miked the amps, and sometimes I went direct by running the amp through a load resistor and a Palmer direct box—which I think is the best-voiced guitar D.I. box going," he says. "When I wanted the sound of a miked speaker, I used a 10" Jensen. I put an old Sennheiser 409 mic in

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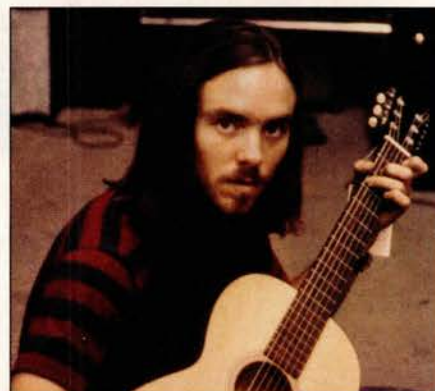
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Ronnie Montrose

front of it, and ran the signal through an ART Pro MPA preamp."

For someone who is meticulous about his tunes and sounds, it's a little surprising that Montrose—who also produced *Gamma 4*—didn't nail



Portrait of the artist as a young man: Montrose and nylon-string in the '70s.

Together Again

One surprise for *Gamma* fans is the appearance of a special guest on the latest album: Edgar Winter plays saxophone on "Resurrection Shuffle" and "Oh No You Don't." Although Montrose and Winter have jammed since their 1972 collaboration—Winter's seminal *They Only Come out at Night* (which produced the classics "Free Ride" and "Frankenstein")—*Gamma 4* marks only the second time they've played on the same record in almost 30 years.

"I've always loved playing with Ronnie," says Winter. "He's always doing something unexpected—with this twinkle in his eye. Cutting those solos was a lot of fun. They're pretty much first takes with a couple of punches. I don't like to comp solos."

"It was incredible playing with Edgar again," enthuses Montrose. "His parts really beefed up the tracks. I stuck an Audio-Technica 4060 mic in front of him, and we cut those solos live—trading off right next to each other. It really inspired me. I mean, with that guy playing sax in the same room, how can you not step up to the plate?"

—MB

down every last detail when making the record. "There was no serious pre-production at all," he admits. "I had thumbnail sketches of the tunes, we ran them in rehearsal, and then we cut them immediately. That lent a certain urgency to the tracks. It was put up or shut up."

Although Montrose has been a confirmed Strat man for the past several years, he relied primarily on a Baker guitar for *Gamma 4*. "Gene Baker used to work in the Fender Custom Shop," he says. "He made me a guitar with a really wide neck—it's 1 7/8" at the nut—that has Seymour Duncan Trembuckers. Those pickups not only sound great, but because of their parallel pole-pieces they also accommodate the string spacing on the Baker."

After years of experimentation, Montrose has finally devised a live setup that suits his taste. "I used to run effects in the amp's loop," he says, "but that was really clouding the main tone of the amp. Even an amp with a parallel loop won't give me the sound I want. So, I tried to bring a pseudo-studio environment to my live rig. I run my amp/load resistor/D.I. chain into a Soundcraft Pro Tracker mixer—which is a very warm-sounding board. I use the mixer's effects sends to run the signal to a delay, and I return the delayed signal to the board so I can control the wet/dry mix with channel faders. Then I send the mixer outputs to a Hafler Pro 5000 power amp. I use PA monitors for speakers because my whole tone is done—I don't need the coloration of a speaker cabinet. What I hear onstage is exactly what the crowd hears."

Despite the fact that *Gamma 4* has been a long time coming, Montrose seems genuinely pleased with the results, and he's content to let the music-biz chips fall where they may. "Let's be real," he says. "People are not clamoring to put *Gamma* in heavy rotation on the radio, so I didn't approach the album that way. In other words, if a song needed to be six or seven minutes long—so be it. I'm very proud of the material, and I'm thankful that *Gamma* still has loyal fans. I did this record for myself, and for them."

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Los Straitjackets

Masked Instrumental Madness

Eddie Angel prepares to body slam his '57 Strat Reissue, while Danny Amis (far left) waits to be tagged in.



By Darrin Fox

A consistent formula for success throughout the Golden Age of instrumental-guitar groups was to play catchy pop tunes with spunky, clean tones—all while looking the part of clean-cut, all-American boys. Well, Los Straitjackets have the catchy

tunes down, but clean cut? Who knows what lurks underneath those Mexican wrestling masks.

"Because we wear the masks, people think we're a gimmick," says Eddie Angel, one half of the Straitjackets' two-guitar attack. "But below the surface there's good music. We

sneak it in like a Trojan horse."

Los Straitjackets' new record, the live *!Damas Y Caballeros!* [Cavalcade], slams down the group's Ventures-meets-Saturday-morning-cartoons style of kick-ass instrumentals. And despite their appearance, Angel and co-guitarist Danny Amis are

the real deal. Both players are deeply rooted in the stylings of classic instrumental guitar acts such as the Ventures, Duane Eddy, and Link Wray.

"The Ventures have obviously been a huge influence on our sound," says Amis. "Our version of 'My Heart Will Go On' (Love

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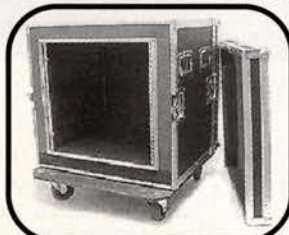
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Los Straitjackets

Theme From Titanic') is exactly something the Ventures would do—a well-known pop song arranged for guitars."

Angel and Amis took the fluffy Celine Dion number, added twang and tremolo, copped the groove from the classic instrumental "Telstar," and—*voilà!*—instant surf classic. "We thought it would be fun to find a song that everybody had heard a lot, and put our own spin on it," says Amis. "We did a gig with the Ventures recently, and Don Wilson told me they had actually recorded a version of the *Titanic* theme, but when they heard our version, they decided to shelve it. That was a really nice compliment—especially coming from someone who influenced us so much."

"The Ventures actually covered one of our tunes, 'Calhoun Surf,'" adds Angel. "When your mentors pay tribute to you, that's a treat."

Because they have three albums under their title belts and thousands of miles of road behind them, *!Damas Y Caballeros!* arguably captures the Straitjackets' retro instrumental rave-ups better than previous releases. "We just set up our gear and played our set straight through," explains Amis. "That night, we played a really good set. I think that's due to a few factors. One, how much gigging we've done over the past few years. Two, it was our first show in a while and we all missed playing. And three, we got lucky."

Although Amis and Angel's styles may seem similar, upon closer inspection each player has a distinctive voice. "Eddie is more improvisational than I am—I pretty much know what I'm going to play all the time," says Amis.

"The way I look at it," says Angel, "Danny is like Hank Marvin and I'm like Link Wray. I'm the trashy rock and roll element, and Danny plays the smoother, more controlled lines. It's definitely a sweet and sour mix."

Despite their differing styles, Amis and Angel's gear choices are similarly retro-approved. Amis plugs his Japanese reissue Fender Jazzmaster into a mid-'60s Fender Vibrolux, and Angel runs his reissue '57 Strat into a silverface Fender Vibrolux.

Although they fly their instrumental flag high, Los Straitjackets are currently working on a record that will feature guest vocalists such as Dave Alvin, Reverend Horton Heat, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' Mike Campbell. "We thought doing a record with vocals would be a novelty for us," says Amis. "But we're not abandoning instrumentals—that's what we do. I like having the freedom to explore melody lines without having to anchor them to words, and it's fun to express an emotional feel with nothing but a melody. Take 'Sleepwalk' for instance—there are no lyrics that can make you feel the way that tune does. I love that."

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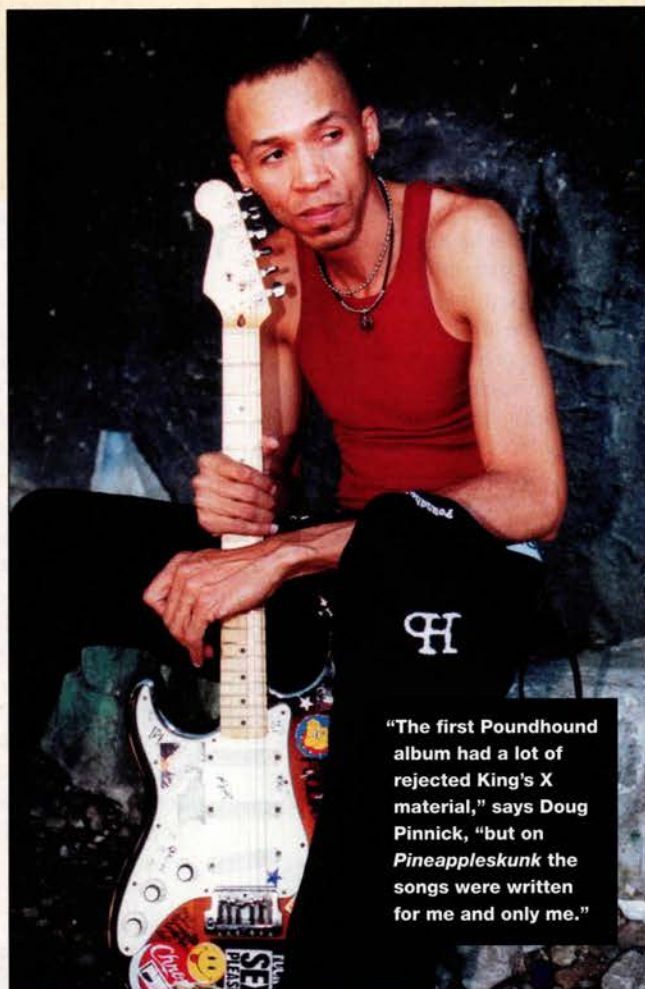
Best known as the soulful, singing bassist of King's X, Doug Pinnick's side project, Poundhound, finds him handling all the guitar chores. On *Pineappleskunk* [Metal-blade], Pinnick's bluesy feel draws heavily from his two biggest guitar influences: Jimi Hendrix and Jim McCarty of the Detroit Wheels and Cactus.

"The way those guys would bend notes and play so slow really had an impact on me," says Pinnick. "I instantly related to the emotions they were expressing."

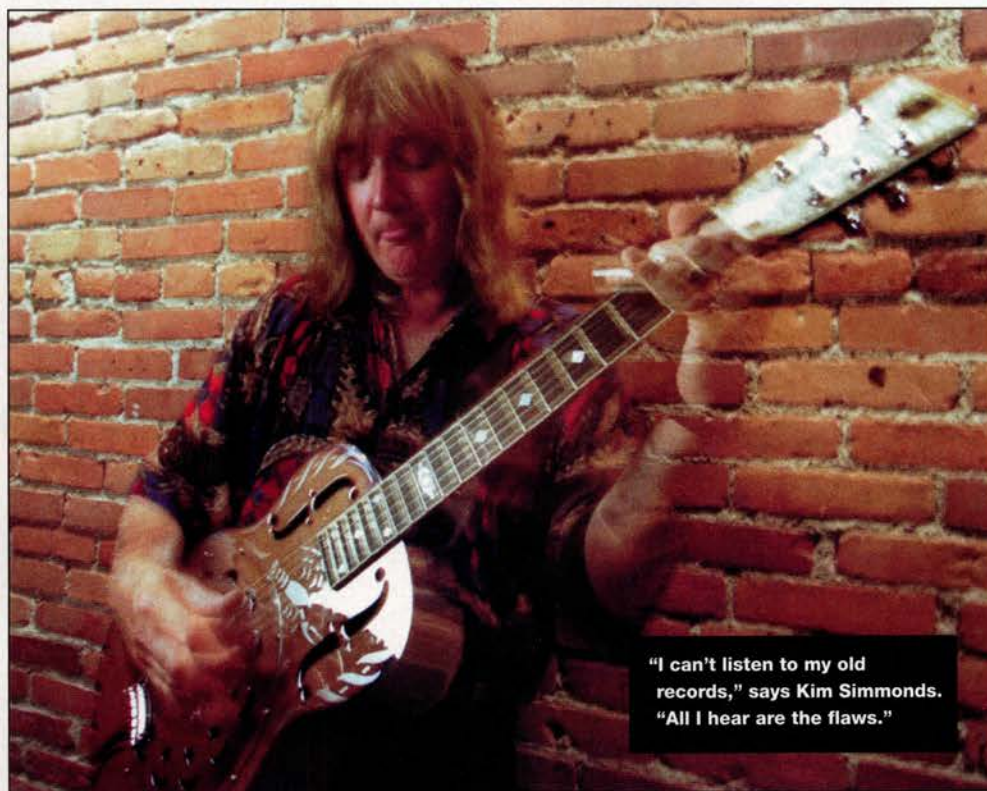
Recorded in the Texas native's 24-track home studio,

Pineappleskunk is a blistering mix of funky metallic grooves, trippy drum-and-bass atmospherics, and confessional lyrics. Pinnick enlisted King's X bandmate Jerry Gaskill to play drums, but wrote all the songs and tracked every guitar, bass, and vocal part himself.

The record also boasts myriad psychedelic guitar tones, which Pinnick achieved by plugging his Fender Strat Elite into a Line 6 Pod. In addition, Pinnick has displayed a penchant for drop tunings since his earliest recordings with King's X, and the material on *Pineappleskunk* is no exception. The



"The first Poundhound album had a lot of rejected King's X material," says Doug Pinnick, "but on *Pineappleskunk* the songs were written for me and only me."



"I can't listen to my old records," says Kim Simmonds. "All I hear are the flaws."

dense riffs that propel the driving rockers "Mind" and "Rain" result from the low *E* string of both the guitar and the bass being tuned down a perfect fifth to *A*. Although these heavy, detuned sounds have become synonymous with angst-ridden gothic metal, Pinnick originally conceived them for a quite different feel.

"When I was younger, and I would dream about music, that low-tuned groove is what I always heard," he says. "To me, it's like your mother's heartbeat in the womb. When I play that kind of groove, it feels warm and safe, and I feel like I'm home."

—VINCENT DEMASI

Kim Simmonds

British blues pioneer Kim Simmonds is the real deal. Not many players can count Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor,

Pickups

and Peter Green as contemporaries, and Simmonds still tours incessantly with Savoy Brown—the band he founded in 1966.

While taking time off to revamp his band, Simmonds began exploring solo-acoustic guitar. His new release, *Blues Like Midnight* [Blue Wave], is the result of the 53-year-old guitarist's realization that, although solo-acoustic and ensemble electric playing seem like polar opposites, the two are actually very similar.

"I found I was communicating to people with the acoustic exactly as I do on the electric—they were still listening to my note choices, and how I bend strings," says Simmonds. "That told me I didn't need the paraphernalia of the electric guitar to get ideas across."

Another surprise struck Simmonds when he started playing acoustic gigs a few years ago. "I thought solo performances would be easier than working with a band," he explains. "I figured, 'It's just me and a guitar—no distractions, no problems.' But the solo gigs are *harder*. For instance, if there's a show coming up, I still have to discipline myself to rehearse, as well as make sure all the material translates to solo performance. What I *don't* have is the luxury of hiding behind a drum groove."

To record *Blues Like Midnight*, Simmonds

took the D.I.Y. approach. "I used a simple set-up," he says. "I miked my Gibson Blues King Electro acoustic with an Audio-Technica AT4051 condenser. Then I ran the signal to a Neve mic preamp and an Alesis ADAT. The only track on which I didn't use that signal path was 'Rag Ah.' I recorded that two years ago in my bedroom. I began playing, and I wanted to capture the moment, so I set up two Shure SM57s. I threw the tune onto a cassette and forgot about it. By the time I found the cassette, I had erased the original ADAT master. I tried to rerecord the song, but I couldn't get the vibe for the life of me. So what you hear on the album is the cassette version."

Being one of British guitar's elder statesmen, Simmonds has the luxury of reflecting on five decades in the blues scene. "I always had a romantic dream of playing in a seedy blues club," he says, "and—lo and behold—here I am living that dream. One of the nice things about getting older is that it clarifies the past. I can look back and identify one of my epiphanies as sitting down as a child and listening to Lightnin' Hopkins records. It's interesting that I've stuck with the blues, but I feel my working class background—my family were coal miners—gives me a lot to draw on. Adversity is good. It's often the fuel that feeds artistic endeavors."

—DARRIN FOX

G. Love & Special Sauce

"There have always been two sides to my musical experience—the stuff I was learning to play, and the stuff I was listening to," says G. Love of G. Love & Special Sauce. "When I was a kid and hanging with my friends, I listened to hip-hop. But when I'd come home, I'd listen to classic rock and blues. Eventually, the styles collided."

Steeped in Stax-style funk, the band's fifth outing, *Electric Mile* [Epic/Okeh], melds hip-hop, reggae, blues, and country tones to illustrate just how fun a collision can be—despite the fact that Love abhors stylistically diverse records.

"I didn't realize how many styles were on this record until I started doing press for it—and I was shocked," he says. "I don't really like records that are all over the place—I don't want to be in a variety show! My favorite records are by guys like John Lee Hooker. Some people think his music is one-dimensional, but that's just his *flavor*."

Considering his old-school influences, it's no surprise that Love is a devotee of vintage gear. His main guitars are a refurbished 1939 Dobro—which he used for all the acoustic leads on *Mile*—and an Italian-made Crucianelli electric that he plugs into a '64 Vox AC30. Other tools include his "old-faithful" Ampeg Reverbrockets

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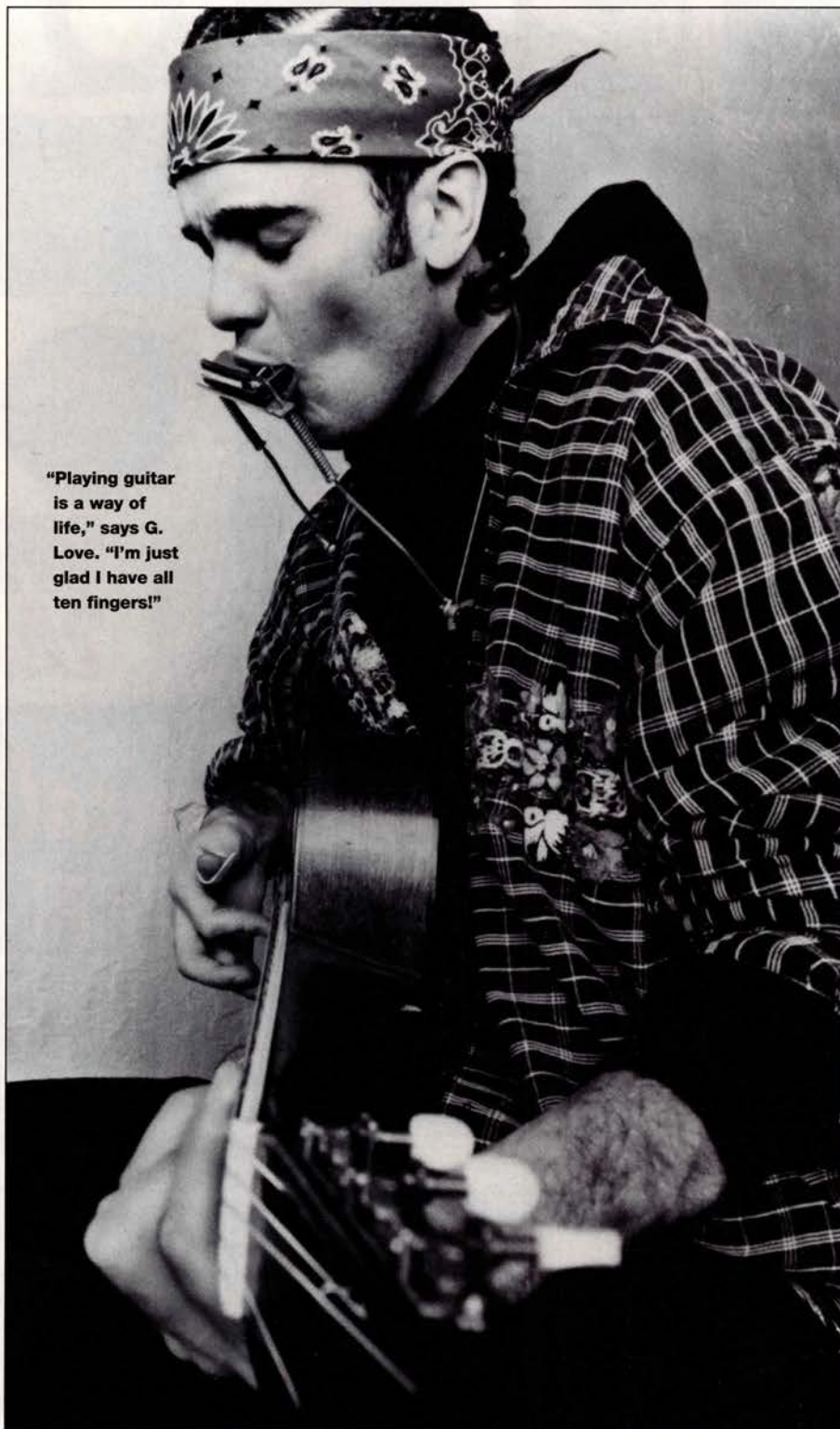
Pickups

("I have three, and they all sound different"), a tweed Fender Vibrolux, a Gibson Les Paul (tuned down a half step), and a Gibson J-45. Love strings all his guitars with D'Addario .013s, and strums with Dunlop thumbpicks. Although he usually steers clear of effects, Love ran his do-bro through Line 6's Amp Farm on the intro to "Hopeless Case," and plugged into an Electro-

Harmonix Q-Tron for "Praise Up"—one of the many reggae-tinged cuts on the album.

"You can learn so much from reggae—it's more than just playing upbeat," says Love. "Reggae has taught me to lay back rhythmically, and it has helped me create better lead lines. If you need an example, check out the solo on Bob Marley's 'Stir It Up'—which is one of my all-time favorites. The phrasing and tone are absolutely beautiful." —SHAWN HAMMOND ■

"Playing guitar
is a way of
life," says G.
Love. "I'm just
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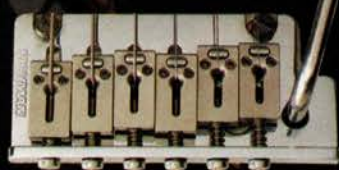
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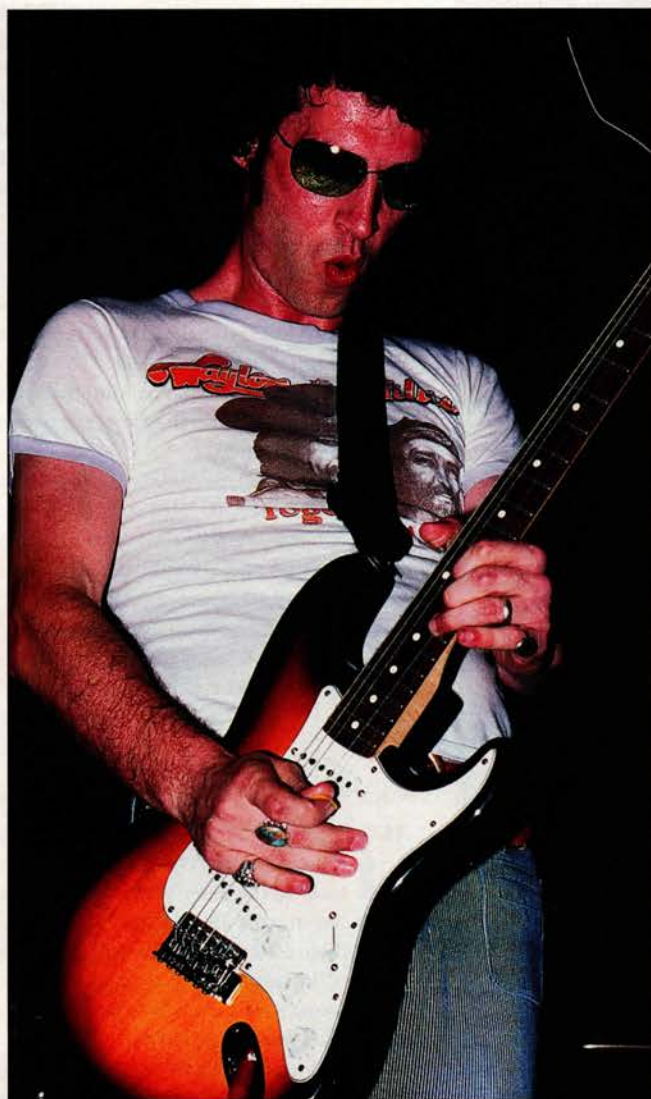
Buzz

Built to Spill

I'm not a technically skilled guitarist, but I never have a shortage of ideas," says Built to Spill's Doug Martsch. "Chops can only take you so far. The most important things are

finding some sweet notes and letting them ring."

On *Ancient Melodies of the Future* [Warner Bros.], Martsch's hypnotic vocal melodies, soaring leads, and production ideas def-



"My music is focused on songs," says Leroy, "not the guitar."



"I have a lot of sonic tricks to fall back on if I ever run out of song ideas," says Built to Spill's Doug Martsch.

initely showcase a player with a glut of creative energy. Using everything from evocative slide riffs to backwards, synth-like lines (courtesy of a Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler), Martsch brings his band's songs to life with thoughtful and vibey guitar parts.

His main guitar is the same Fender Stratocaster he bought in the late '80s, but Martsch recently had a revelation about amplifiers. "The best clean tone is one that actually has some dirt in it," he says. "I used to use a Fender Twin Reverb, but when it died, I switched to a '60s Fender Tremolux. The Trem has a certain thickness that other amps don't have, and it breaks up without being super distorted. Twins can't do that because they have too much power."

Although he didn't approach *Ancient Melodies* as a statement of technique, Martsch doesn't believe that guitar gymnastics are always unwelcome. "It's possible to have both chops and feeling," he says. "Jimi Hendrix had the whole package—technical ability, tone, and musicality. He was a culmination of everything I respect about music."

—JUDAH GOLD

Leroy

All of the music I'd written in the past revolved around the guitar," says Leroy, "and that always sent me down the same musical path. For this record, I wrote songs based on feelings and experiences, and then tried to compose guitar

Buzz

parts that made sense."

Leroy's self-titled debut [Hollywood] definitely heralds a writer with an expanded palette. Although he is deeply rooted in the styles of legends such as Billy Gibbons and Jimi Hendrix, Leroy fearlessly united a variety of musical genres that includes blues, funk, punk, hip-hop, and jazz. He also incorporated two technologies that make some guitarists cringe: MIDI and sampling. The main tone tool on *Leroy* was a Roland VG-8, controlled by a Fender Standard

Tele equipped with a Roland GK-2A synth pickup. All parts were recorded to a Tascam DA-88, and then transferred to Pro Tools for sample manipulation and editing. One of his favorite samples on the album is a string section snipped from a recording by his father's high-school orchestra in 1953, which was cleverly tucked into "Error Of My Ways."

"I use samples to get inspired," explains Leroy. "I compile a bunch of really cool parts and use them to create something totally new and different. Guitarists shouldn't be afraid of sampling. If anything, sampling keeps the old

stuff alive—it's like recycling music. It's a beautiful thing when it's done right." —LISA SHARKEN

Johnny A.

Blending elements of surf, jazz, rock, and '60s pop, Johnny A.'s bell-toned phrases speak with a solid confidence on the instrumental *sometime tuesday morning* [Favored Nations]. The guitarist's treatment of classic tunes such as Jimmy Webb's "Wichita Lineman" and the Beatles' "Yes It Is," suggests a careful, lifelong focus on a specific concept.

"Not even close," laughs the Boston-based player. "The album came at a time when everything had fallen apart for me. No gig, no band—*nothing*. I was playing in my bedroom one day, and I realized that, after all these years of being a guitar player, I couldn't sit down and play a song from start to finish—chords, melody, and all—and really deliver the tune by myself. That revelation was the seed for *sometime tuesday morning*."

Originally inspired by Chet Atkins, the self-taught A. pecked his way through a few piano arrangements in a Beatles songbook, and the effort opened a new world of voicings, patterns, and ideas. As he developed his instrumental approach, some of the original solo-guitar arrangements were opened up to accommodate a trio format.

To produce the sonic landscape of *sometime tuesday morning*, A. used a stable of Gibsons—including a Historic Series ES-295, Les Paul goldtop and Standard reissues, and an ES-335—all equipped with Bigsby. "The Bigsby's have a more liquid, watery sound than other vibratos," says A., "and they've really become a part of my sound."

Both live and in the studio, A. favors Marshall 30th Anniversary 6100/6101 combos and half-stacks. *Sometime tuesday morning* was recorded using the amps' speaker-emulated output routed into a Neve 1058 mic preamp.

"You never know if something is going to be successful," says A. "So all you can do is put your heart into a project and let things happen."

—RUSTY RUSSELL

California

It's not cool to be a good guitar player these days," says California's Steve Norton. "In the early '90s, grunge came in and killed straight-ahead rock and roll, and all of a sudden rock was a bad word in the music industry. But now, all these shoegazer bands are really boring to me. I mean, I didn't practice all those years *not* to play well."

On California's self-titled debut [Trauma], Norton and co-guitarist/vocalist John Gregory do their part to bring back the bluesy strut and swagger of the Golden Age of classic rock. There's a bit of a twist, however, as the band's

Johnny A. cradles his Bigsby-equipped Gibson Les Paul.



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Buzz

powerful roar is also full of nuances. Part of the reason for this is Norton's penchant for layering tracks with lush, fingerpicked acoustic parts.

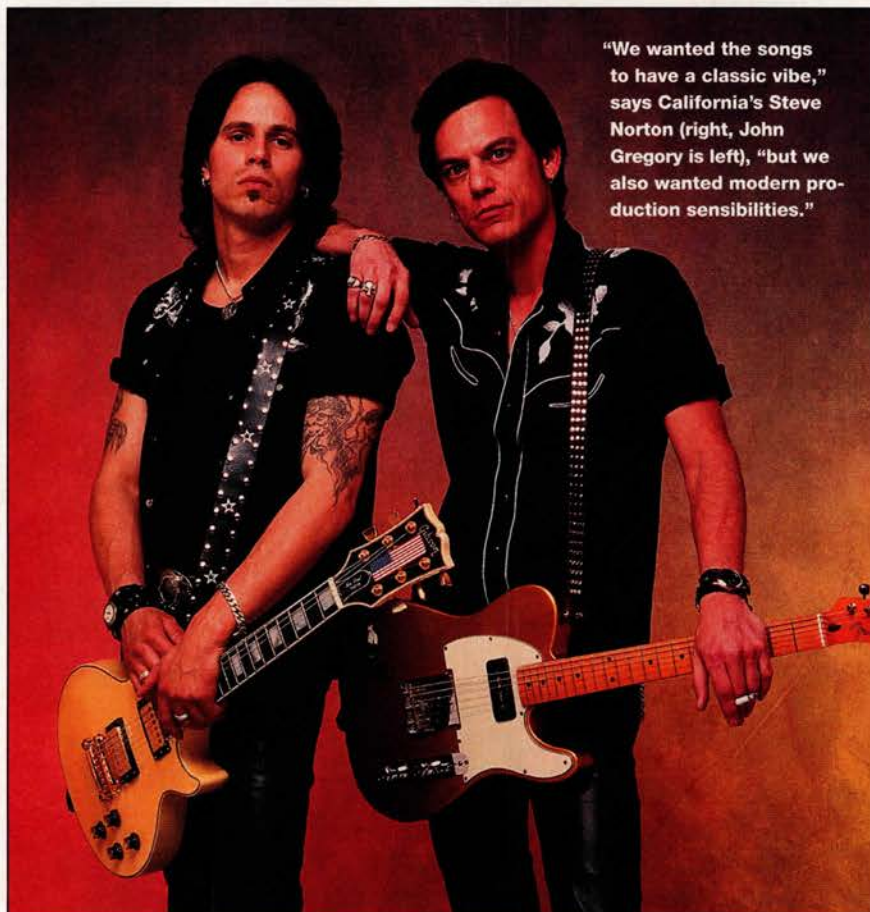
"When you're fingerpicking, you've essentially got five picks at your disposal," he says. "If you learn to use all of your fingers, you can do a lot of interesting things."

Although California doesn't stray too far from the bawdy tones of classic stadium rock, Norton isn't afraid to experiment with his sound. "I'm a bit of a tech-head," he admits. "A lot of my guitars become Frankensteins, because I'm always changing pickups. On my main guitar—a Fender Danny Gatton Tele—I installed a late-'60's Gibson P-90 in the rhythm slot, and then swapped out the lead pickup for a Seymour Duncan Pearly Gates humbucker. Now *that's* a fat sounding guitar."

For gritty tones, Norton plugs into a 100-watt Marshall JMP head and a Celestion Greenback-loaded Sound City cabinet. A '66 Fender Showman head and a Vox 2x12 cabinet loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s are employed for clean sounds. Effects include an Ibanez Tube Screamer, a Korg Toneworks delay, and a Dunlop CryBaby.

"I play as loud as I can get away with—much to the chagrin of sound guys," laughs Norton. "The way a cranked amp interacts with your guitar is magical. You simply can't recreate that magic at low volumes."

—CHRISTIAN WISSMULLER



"We wanted the songs to have a classic vibe," says California's Steve Norton (right, John Gregory is left), "but we also wanted modern production sensibilities."

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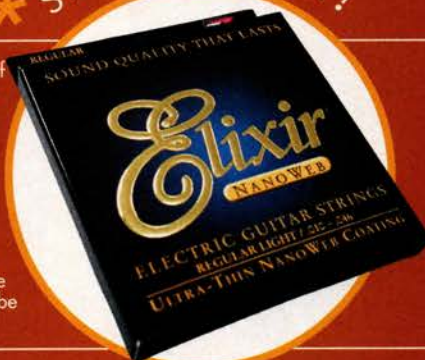
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BEHIND-THE-SCENES NEWS ON THE GUITAR BIZ



BEACHSIDE BLUES

For the past five years, the Fender Catalina Island Blues Festival has proven that blues can be just as hot served amidst sand, sun, and lapping waves, as in a sweat-and booze-drenched nightclub. The 5th annual festival rocked hard on May 11-13, with portions of the proceeds benefitting the Fender Museum of Music and the Arts' "Kids Rock Free" program (fendermuseum.com). Spearheaded by executive director—and former Fender Custom Shop boss—John Page, the Museum endeavors to put instruments in the hands of all children who want to riff, as well as provide educational resources.

This year, the fest focused on Texas tone, and Double Trouble was on hand to bring its latest album, *Been a Long Time* [Tone-Cool], to the concert stage. Reprising their guest appearances on the record for the crowd at Catalina's Descanso Beach were Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Susan

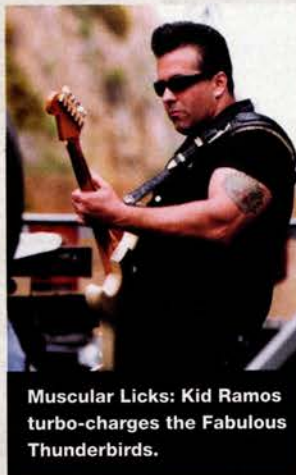
Tedeschi, and Malford Milligan. Edgar Winter also joined the onstage bash—knocking out his classics "Frankenstein" and "Free Ride," as well as other tunes—and additional "drop-ins" included earlier festival artists Jake Andrews and Tommy Castro.

The previous night, Tedeschi and her band held forth at the Casino Ballroom—an Art Deco marvel still rife with the ghosts of Hollywood legends partying to big bands. At other shows, more totally bad-ass guitar was laid down by Fender's Mike Lewis (performing with Big Nick & the Gila Monsters), Favored Nations recording artist Greg Koch, and *GP* Spotlight alumnus Greg V. The big surprise—according to sun-washed *GP* staffers—was current Fabulous Thunderbirds' guitarist Kid Ramos. We were delighted to be knocked squarely on our butts by his intense live chops.

Blues on the beach? Believe it! And here's a tip: Mark your calendars now for next year's festival, because venue capacity and lodging is limited, and the Island's commuter boats book up fast.

SUMMER NAMM SCOOPS

It's just before the Summer NAMM show in Nashville, and the rumors are flying. Although most companies are loathe to cough up details about a new product before its official unveiling in Nashville, here are a few tidbits of gossip *GP* was able to leak at press time.



Muscular Licks: Kid Ramos turbo-charges the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

- Line 6 is introducing the powerhouse alluded to in Craig Anderton's *Techno Tools* column last issue. The Vetta will be the company's flagship amp, and it's slated to include seriously re-engineered amp models, stompbox models, effects, a Bradshaw-like foot controller, the ability to run two amp models simultaneously and independently, and a "double track" feature (for recreating studio-like tone layers onstage). Also debuting will be Echo Pro, Filter Pro, and Modulation Pro—rack versions of the company's popular modeling stompboxes.

- Vox amps will launch what the company feels is its most important product since the legendary

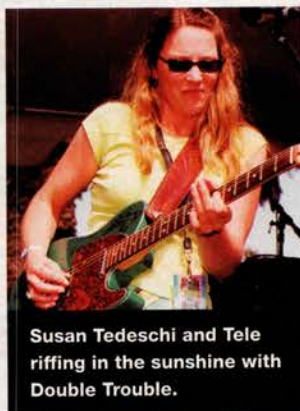
AC30. The slogan is simply this: "What a modeling amp *should* be."

- ESP plans to offer its first starter-guitar pack, which will include an LTD M-10 electric guitar, an LTD HG-25 high-gain amp, a tuner, a gig bag, a strap, and an instructional video on beginning metal.

- Hughes & Kettner is set to introduce the Warp 7 half-stack. Designed to deliver extreme, over-the-top gain, the Warp 7 also utilizes a larger cabinet to enhance low-end.

- Trouble Valli of Crazytown will get his very own Schecter Diamond Series Signature Model, joining Mike Tempesta, Robert DeLeo, and Jerry Horton.

- Casecore—home of the Coffin Case—is unearthing its innovative Body Bags. The coffin-shaped gig bags incorporate a flexible and lightweight Armor Frame shell that holds its shape and is tough enough to deflect most guitar-damaging grem-lins. Body Bags will be available with a diamond-tucked velvet interior (burgundy or black) and a removeable pouch. —MICHAEL MOLENDEN



Susan Tedeschi and Tele riffing in the sunshine with Double Trouble.



The one-of-a-kind Regina del Mare built to commemorate the 5th Fender Catalina Blues Festival. Hand-carved by George Amicay and hand-painted by Pamalina Hovnatanian, the guitar was auctioned off to benefit Kids Rock Free.



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THE EVOLUTION OF THE 4x12 CABINET



By Art Thompson

Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Duane Allman were stylistically different as night and day, but they all had one thing in common: they worked their magic through Marshall 4x12 speaker cabinets. Nothing looks or sounds quite as gnarly as a Marshall head atop two 4x12 cabs—heck, you practically need a stepladder to reach the knobs! And despite the fact that modern sound systems can project a low-wattage combo into the upper reaches of a stadium, if you want classic tone and vibe, you simply have to push air with a 4x12.

The classic Marshall box dates back to 1962, when Jim Marshall was experimenting with speakers and cabinet designs for use with his new JTM45 amplifier (built in conjunction with Ken Bran and Dudley Craven—the “JTM” stands for Jim and his son, Terry). “We were trying out 2x12 cabinets with the prototype amp, but they just didn’t deliver the sound or projection we were looking for,” Marshall recalls. “Plus, two 15-watt Celestion G12 speakers couldn’t handle the nearly 50-watts of power the amp put out when it was turned all the way up. [Note: the G12s were essentially Celestion “Blues”—minus the rounded magnet cover and blue paint.] Eventually, it occurred to me that four speakers would probably do it. They’d be able to handle the amp’s power and give me the projection I was looking for. So, I made the first 4x12 cabinet in my garage workshop. There was nothing particularly

brilliant about its design—I just made it as small as possible for easier transport.”

From 1962 to 1966, all Marshall cabs were built using butt joints. (The four sides of the wood frame were literally “buted up” against each other and glued.) Since late 1996, all Marshall cabinets are constructed with fingerlocked joints. These joints are much stronger, due to the interweaving of the wood, and an increased surface area being glued.

Though Marshall’s first 4x12 featured a straight front, the cabinet was quickly redesigned with its now-familiar angled shape. “When I put an amp head on top of that first 4x12,” says Marshall, “I thought ‘That’s terrible—it just looks like a small box sitting on top of a bigger one.’ Then I came up with the idea of putting an angle on the upper front of the speaker cabinet to better match the head’s dimensions. I wanted a neater package, and I got it. At first, I didn’t even realize there was also a sonic benefit to having the top speakers angled slightly upwards. But one night, I went to a Brian Poole and the Tremoloes gig and noticed how clearly I could hear the guitar at the back of a hall packed with people. I knew right then it was because the angled design was throwing the sound over their heads.”

THE STACK ATTACK!

By 1965, the Marshall half-stack was in use by a number of British Beat groups. But as the Who rocketed to fame that year, stages got big-

ger, crowds grew larger, and Pete Townshend began calling for something louder.

“Pete came into my shop one day and told me he wanted us to make him a 100-watt head,” says Marshall. “We’d not even thought



The classic butt joint. Marshall cabs have used fingerlocked joints since 1966, but the current JTM45 offset reissue half-stack is butt jointed for authenticity.



A special jig ensures that the JTM45 cabinets are kept square until the glued joints set correctly.



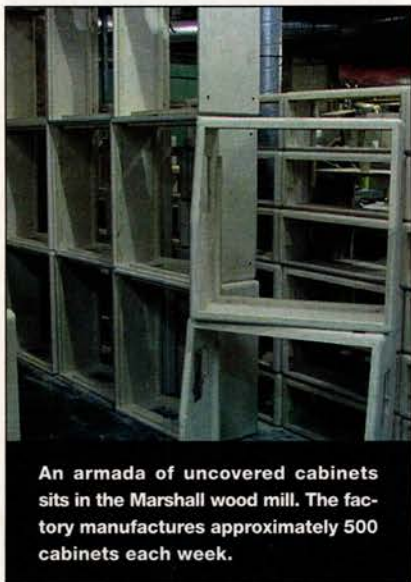
For standard 4x12 cabinet sides, the “Hauncher” cuts comb joints (for the fingerlocked corner joints) into knotless, 11-ply Latvian birch that’s 15mm thick.



Jim Marshall in the company’s Milton Keynes, England, museum. At right—atop a “naked” slant cabinet—is the very first Marshall amp.

about making a 100 wattier until then, but I decided to have a go at it. We built a prototype, and then we made three heads for him. When Pete's roadie came to get them, he just threw the new amps into his bloody truck. I remember thinking, 'Oh, my God! I can't believe he just did that.'

"Sometime later, Pete came back and



An armada of uncovered cabinets sits in the Marshall wood mill. The factory manufactures approximately 500 cabinets each week.

asked for some 8x12 cabinets to go with the 100-watt heads. I suggested that we just make a 4x12 with a straight front and put an angled 4x12 on top of it, but Pete said, 'No, I don't want that—I want it all in one cabinet.' So we built the first "stack" as a single-unit 8x12, and, sure enough, it was damned heavy! When I told Pete his roadies were going to complain, he just said, 'Sod 'em! They get paid.'

"But it wasn't long before Pete was back asking me to cut the 8x12s in half. That wasn't pos-



Completed frames leave an oven heated to about 149 degrees—which ensures that when a water-based glue is sprayed on, the wood surface is tacky enough to guarantee firm adhesion with vinyl coverings.

sible, of course, because of how the cabinet was butt jointed—we hadn't started using finger-locked joints then. So I said, 'Look Pete, just leave them with me and I'll get it sorted out.'

"In the end, I did what I wanted to do in the first place—which was to have a straight-front cab with an angled one sitting on top. I don't mind admitting that appearance was very much on our minds when we built the first stack, because a wall of them does make a fantastic backdrop!"

Many thanks to Jim Marshall and Nick Bowcott for all the facts!



A worker applying the signature Marshall covering to the cabinet. Until 1984, Marshall himself would toil in the covering section and autograph the cabinets he finished. "I insist the lads sign their work," he says, "because they should be proud of it."

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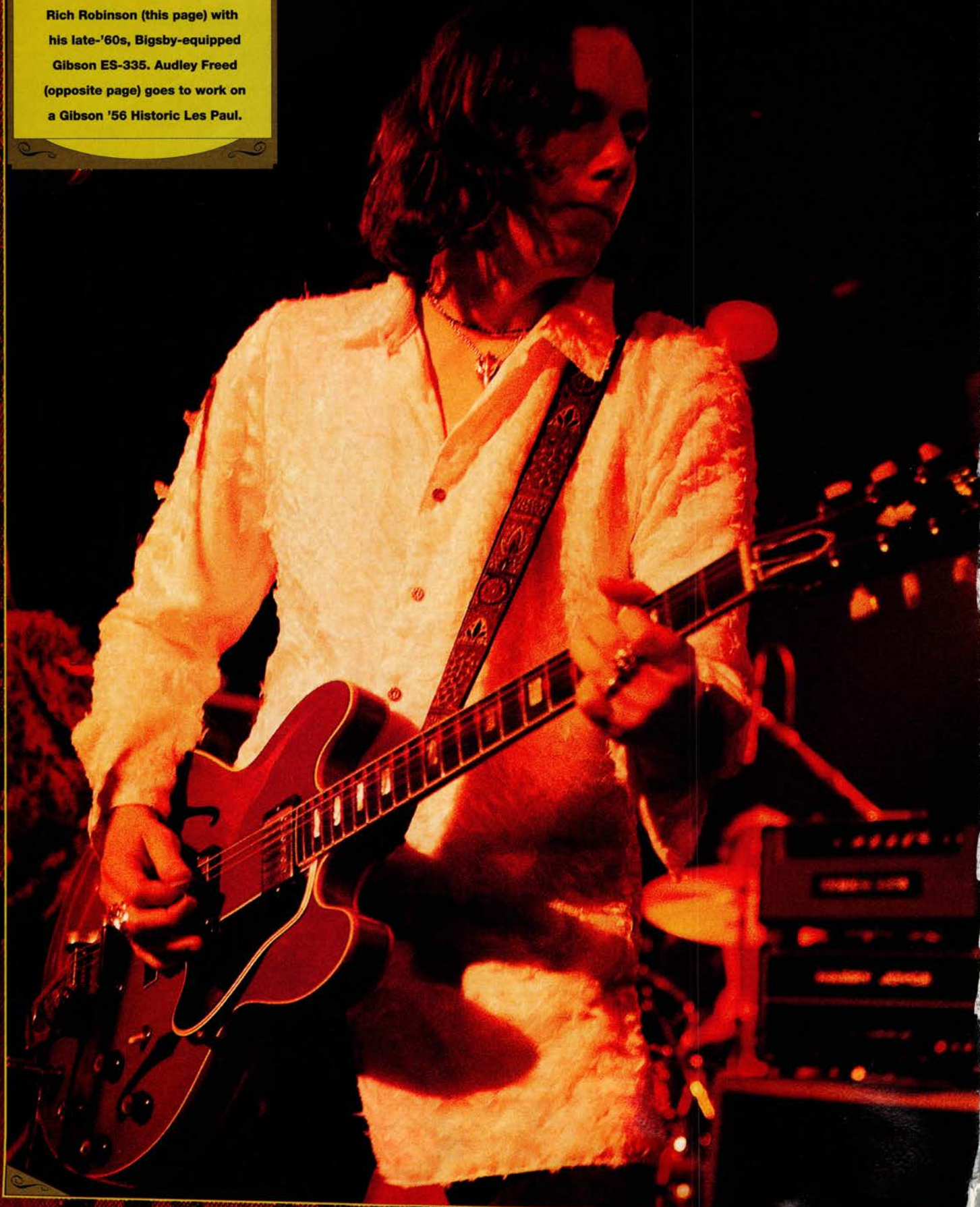
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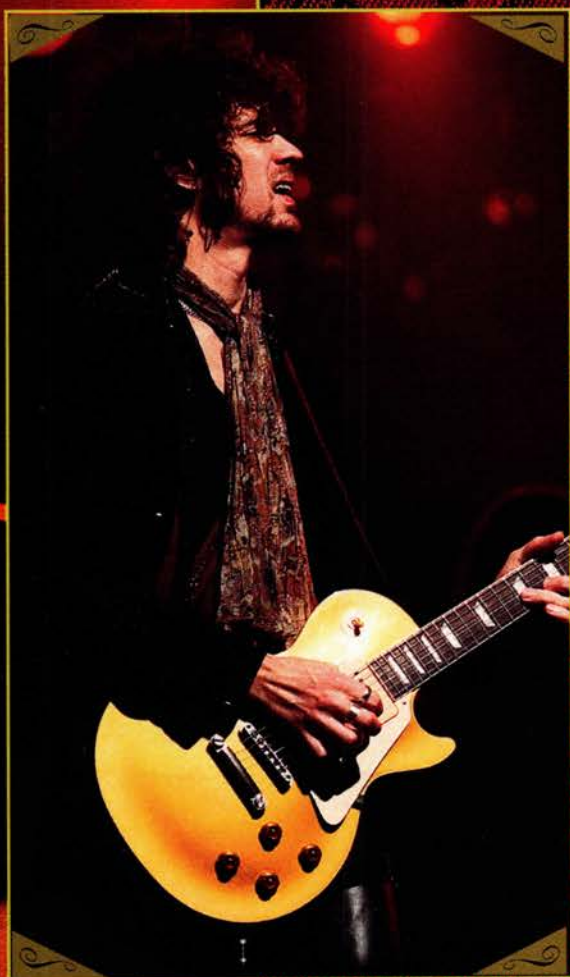
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Rich Robinson (this page) with his late-'60s, Bigsby-equipped Gibson ES-335. Audley Freed (opposite page) goes to work on a Gibson '56 Historic Les Paul.



Hot ROCK



The Black Crowes' GROOVY ECLECTICISM RULES LIONS

Ever since they swaggered onto the airwaves in 1990, the Black Crowes have been rock's stylistic nomads. After rocketing to fame on their hard-rocking brand of '70s revivalism, the Crowes have kept themselves and their audiences entertained by exploring such seemingly diverse paths as Grateful Dead-style jams and Led Zeppelin tributeism. ■ Some ten years and 15 million albums hence, the Crowes are still concocting new ways to shake things up. Last year, they pulled off a monstrously spectacular coup by getting Jimmy Page to join them for a high-profile tour, and, in the spring of 2001 the band launched its sixth album, *Lions* [V2]. ▶ ▶ ▶

By

ART THOMPSON

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Pot ROCK

Recorded on the stage of an old Yiddish music theater on New York's Lower East Side, and overseen by veteran producer Don Was, *Lions* highlights the band's diversity with high-torque rock, swampy acoustic grooves, and sojourns into gospel, funk, and psychedelia.

Besides encapsulating much of what the Crowes have been doing over the last decade, the new CD also provides Internet access to live recordings made during the band's summer U.S. tour. "It's just another way to give people free access to our shows," explains guitarist/songwriter Rich Robinson. "We've always allowed taping, but since some of the bands we tour with aren't cool with it, our solution was to record the shows from this tour and post them on a special Web site. Anyone who buys this record can download one entire show of their choice, or individual songs from different shows."

Whether a clever ploy to boost record sales or a reflection of the heartfelt appreciation the Crowes have for their fans, this undertaking has certainly put a new spin on the age-old taping question—hopefully, one that other bands will adopt.

Crowes co-guitarist Audley Freed was recruited in 1998 for the *By Your Side* tour, and faced the challenge of weaving himself into the fabric of a band that was determined to refocus its sound following the departure of guitarist Mark Ford. Freed certainly had his marching orders from Rich Robinson, who told *GP* at the time, "Knowing when *not* to play is one of the most valuable things you ever have to know. It's hard for people to learn that because your first inclination—especially when you play lead guitar—is just to go *woo* and do back flips and score the goal."

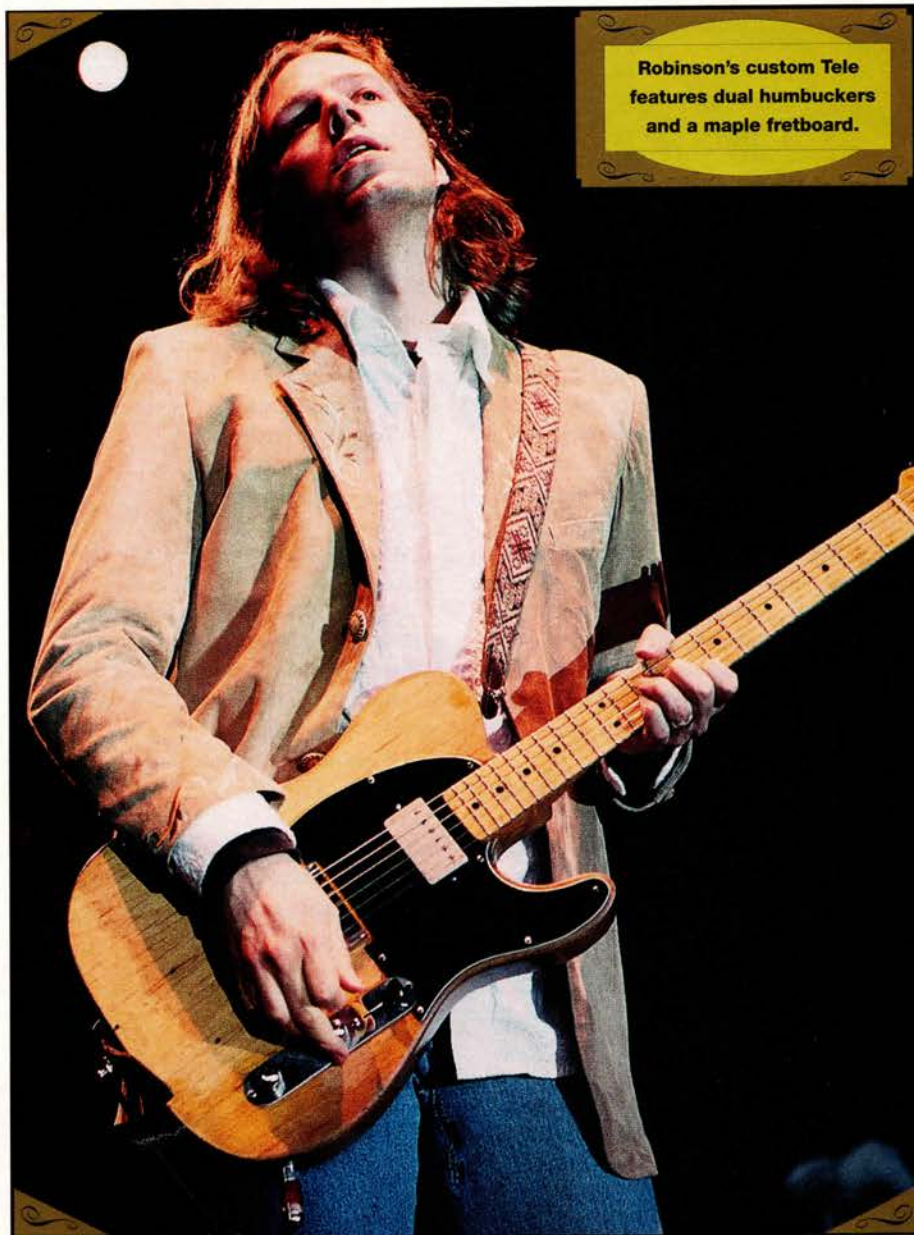
We checked in with Robinson and Freed as the band was preparing to kick off the *Tour of Brotherly Love* with headliners Oasis.

Rich Robinson

How did recording in a theater affect the sound of this record?

In the past, we've often recorded basic tracks with just our drummer Steve Gorman and me—which meant that we were the *entire* rhythm section at that formative stage. This time, we had the whole band together. Everything was bleeding into Chris' vocal mic, which is a really cool effect.

Did you record that way to give the record



more of a live feel?

Well, we started this album right after the Jimmy Page tour, and touring does have an effect on the kind of record you're trying to make. If you want a real studio-sounding record, it's better to get away from the live element for a while. We've done it both ways. We took a long break before recording *America*, but *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion* was recorded right after a tour.

What were your guitar choices for the album?

I brought all my guitars this time because we had the space, but my main guitar was a '54 Fender Esquire with a maple neck. I used it on most of the songs because it sounds so incredible. On "Soul Singing" I used a James Trussart metal-bodied electric, which has a resonator-like tone. I just took its piezo output and ran it direct. That was really the only guitar I could have played on that song. I also used a custom guitar called a Zitlau, which looks like an old

Supro, but it's made out of korina and has two Tom Holmes humbuckers.

Did you play though a rotary speaker on "Young Man, Old Man"?

That's a Hughes & Kettner Rotosphere pedal, which I'm also using live. I just stepped on that pedal during one of the pre-production sessions, and that take wound up being the version of the song we used for the album.

Which amps did you use?

I've been playing Harry Joyce amps a lot lately. Joyce was the guy who built all those early Hiwatts. My previous guitar tech turned me on to his new models, and I wound up liking them more than the Matchless amps I had been using.

What's the main difference?

The Harry Joyces have more bottom and they sound a little tighter.

So you were after more of a Hiwatt-type sound?

Yeah, but I also had my tweed Fender Twins—a '53 and '55—and I used Chris' old



Marshall Bluesbreaker combo on some things. I hooked the Joyce, the Bluesbreaker, and one of the Twins together for the solo at the end of "Lay it all On Me."

Did you plan for Lions to be such a multi-faceted album?

We don't sit down and plan things like that—the songs dictated where the record was going to go. I'd say 80 percent of this record was made in pre-production—nine out of 13 songs were cut at our rehearsal studio. When you've got that many great takes at such an early stage, it sets the mood for a really free and spontaneous sort of record.

Did Don Was become involved at the pre-production stage?

Yeah. Chris and I wrote the songs and had them pretty much finished, and when we played them on acoustic for Don, he said, "Man, I really

get what you guys are going for. I think it's a big step for you."

In what sense?

There aren't a lot of guitars on this record because I wanted more space. It's a guitar-based record, but I wanted the keyboards and bass to stand out. I wanted everything to be in its place so you can hear the inner workings of the instruments, as opposed to just hearing a wall of guitars. Another benefit to having leaner arrangements is that when Audley came in, he had great moments to play over. He doesn't come off sounding like just another guitar noodling in the background.

Audley Freed

What is your primary role in the Black Crowes?

My job is to help flesh out the songs live and to fill any holes in the recordings that the guys feel would benefit from my style. At the end of the day, it all comes down to all of us trying to play the right stuff.

Do you have any standout parts on the new album?

I have a solo spot on "Greasy Grass River," and that's me playing the clean wah solo at the end of "Ozone Mama." I also did the pedal steel-sounding things in the beginning of "Cosmic

Friend." I definitely don't consider myself a legitimate country guitar player—I got that sound just screwing around with a Fender Blues Deville amp and a Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler pedal.

What is your main guitar?

I've been leaning on a Gibson '59 Historic Les Paul plaitop for the past couple of years. I didn't want a guitar with a fancy flame top, so I went to the Gibson Custom Shop in Nashville and found this one. It's very responsive, and it has that big neck that contributes a lot to the tone. I've also got a '56 Historic goldtop with P-90s, a Terry C. McInturff Taurus prototype, a Fender '57 Relic Strat, and a reissue '52 Tele.

Did you tune down for some of the songs on this album?

I played a Fender Sub-Sonic Tele for a few songs that are in open tunings and tuned down a whole step. Sometimes I'll tune the Sub-Sonic to a Skip James-style tuning, which is like a D-minor, but down a whole step. Add a little tremolo, and you've got a killer swamp sound. I didn't use that setup on the record, but it works great for filling in parts live.

What kinds of amps are you using onstage?

I have a Bogner Ecstasy and a Fender Tone Master. I mainly use the clean channel on the Bogner and just turn it up—which is kind of a waste because it has so many other sounds. The Tone Master is primarily for the clean stuff,

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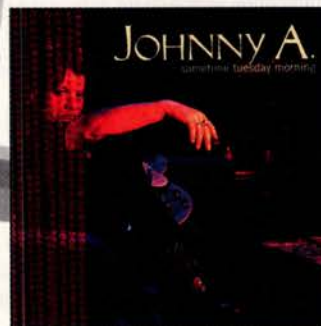
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and it's a good substitute for my old Fender Dual Showman, which I don't bring on the road because of reliability issues. I run the Bogner and Fender heads into two open-back Matchless 4x12 cabs that are loaded with 8Ω Celestion Vintage 30s. I just switch between them—I never use both amps at the same time. I also had my tech wire one of the Matchless cabs for stereo operation so I can run both heads into one cabinet when we're playing a smaller place. Another amp that I might put into the live setup is a Dr. Z KT45, though it's not quite loud enough for this band.

Did you use different amps in the studio?

For my solo on "Greasy Grass River," I plugged into Chris' original Bluesbreaker combo. Plug a Les Paul into that amp, crank the first bit of "Hideaway," and there you go. I also used a Fender Blues Deville for the clean solo on "Ozone Mama."

What do you use to switch amps live?

I have a Bradshaw switcher, which I also use to control my stompboxes. I've been thinking about going back to a simple pedalboard, but I haven't gotten that together yet.

What kinds of pedals are in the system?

I recently went back to my old Ibanez TS9 after my Klon Centaur stopped working. I'm also planning to try the Voodoo Lab Sparkle Drive, which I've heard good things about. I thought the Klon box was cool because it didn't really color the tone, but I found that I prefer the more midrangy sound of the Tube Screamer with a Strat. I've also got a Fulltone Deja Vibe, a Fulltone Soul Bender, and a Prescription Electronics Clean Octave pedal that I use when I need a freaky Funkadelic lead sound, or some Hendrix color. I carry an assortment of wahs, too—a reissue Vox, a Budda Wah, and a Teese Real McCoy.

What was it like playing with Jimmy Page?

It's hard to put the whole experience into perspective. He showed me things about those Zeppelin songs that were different from the way I'd learned them, and it was cool being able to cover most of the guitar parts. Page did so much layering on those records, but he'd never been able to hear the songs that way live until he played with us. Jimmy was very gracious and totally easy to be around, but I've got say that standing next to him trying to figure out who was going to play which part was pretty mindblowing!

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▼ The Allmans onstage: Brother Duane lays a slide to his red Gibson SG, as Dickey Betts leans into the roar of his goldtop Les Paul.



The boys are back:
Thin Lizzy's Brian
Robertson (left)
and Scott Gorham
harmonize on
a pair of Pauls. ►





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Twin tones and layered lines

HOW TO CREATE AND ARRANGE HARMONIZED GUITAR PARTS

Whether it's sweet and singing or rude and searing, the sound of guitars locked in harmony is powerful and seductive. Fortunately, it's not difficult to create this dimensional effect. Once you understand a few basic techniques, you'll be able to arrange harmonized guitar parts and insert them into your own music. To that end, let's

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The World's Finest Guitars

twin tones and layered lines

analyze a handful of classic, twin-guitar passages inspired by the Allman Brothers, Steely Dan, Thin Lizzy, the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Humble Pie, and the maestro of track layering, Brian May.

Armed with one guitar and a beady set of eyes, you can suss out the following examples. But to *really* get down with harmonized guitar, you'll want to haul out a multitrack recorder or invite a guitar-totin' friend along for

the ride. Hearing both parts together, you'll make a crucial discovery: It's not just the intervals, but the enriched *texture* that's responsible for creating twin-guitar magic.

Shifting Intervals

Thin Lizzy's "The Boys Are Back in Town" features tough, yet melodic harmony played by Brian Robertson and Scott Gorham. In Ex. 1, we examine a snippet from the 16-bar, twin-guitar solo.

Sparse and horn-like, Ex. 1 begins with thirds: $C\sharp-E$ (minor third) and $A-C\sharp$ (major third). While major and minor thirds form the backbone of many harmonized lines, other intervals add intriguing colors. For exam-

ple, bar 3 begins with a tritone ($G-C\sharp$). Comprising three whole-steps, this edgy interval outlines an $A7$ by stating its $\flat 7$ (G) and 3 ($C\sharp$). In bar 3, the line drifts into parallel fourths ($A-D$ and $B-E$) before settling down to a minor third ($F\sharp-A$) in bar 4.

Take some time to get acquainted with these intervals—the major and minor thirds, the perfect fourths, and the tritone. The more quickly you can recognize them sonically *and* visually, the easier it will be to master guitar harmony.

Some performance tips: The top line (Gtr. 1) sounds cool played with a round, sustaining tone. Pick the bottom line (Gtr. 2) closer to the bridge to keep it crisp and distinct. It's a fast rock shuffle, so feel the underlying eighth-note pulse like this: *dah-do, dah-do*.

Ex. 1

$\text{♩} = 152-160$

Rock shuffle $\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ ♩}$

Gtr. 1

TAB

9 9\6 6 7 5 7 (7)

Gtr. 2

TAB

6 6\2 5 2 4 4 (4)

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Ex. 2

$\text{♩} = 176-184$

Brisk & relaxed

Gtr. 1

TAB

7 5 5 8 8 10 (10) 7 5 5 8 5 6 (6)

Gtr. 2

TAB

7 5 5 7 7 9 (9) 7 5 5 7 5 7 (7)

The Shortest Path from A to D



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twin tones and layered lines

The Sound of Fourths

The Allman Brothers' Duane Allman and Dickey Betts epitomize twin-guitar harmony, and Ex. 2—which comes from “Revival (Love Is Everywhere)” —illustrates the elegant contours of their timeless duets.

The phrase is primarily composed of perfect fourths. Unlike thirds, which imply either a major or minor tonality, fourths sound ambiguous, restless, and a bit exotic. At three points, however, this ambiguity gets grounded by major thirds: C-E (on the *and* of beat two, in bars 1 and 3), and the vibrato-laden A-C# (at the end of 4-bar phrase).

Except for the final C#, each line is built exclusively from the A minor pentatonic scale, yet—thanks to the fourths—the sound isn't bluesy. Despite the song's brisk tempo, Allman and Betts manage to sound loose and relaxed.

Play each part with a clean, flutey tone.

Fifths and More

The original Fleetwood Mac featured cool twin-guitar interplay by Peter Green and Danny Kirwin. Inspired by “Coming Your Way,” Ex. 3 offers a flash of their sonic magic. This eight-bar riff comprises a pair of repeated, two-bar phrases. These “cells” begin in unison—two

eighth-notes in the first phrase; three eighth-notes in the second. It's a cool trick: Each phrase seems to bloom as it progresses.

Bar 2 consists entirely of fifths (E-B, D-A, and B-F#), and another fifth appears in bar 4 (F#-C#). Like fourths, fifths don't impart major or minor flavors to the music. The difference is that fifths sound open and stable, while fourths

sound clangy and beg for resolution.

Other riff highlights include a pungent major second (A-B) in bar 1, a fourth (F#-B) in bar 1, bluesy minor sevenths (E-D) in bars 3 and 4, a major sixth (D-B) in bar 4, and an octave (B-B) in bar 4. No shortage of color here!

To nail the distinctive Mac sound, you need to add quick, quivering vibrato to those bends.

Tips for Tracking Twin-Tone Lines

When you're layering harmonized lines in the studio, try to synchronize your attacks. Your harmony will carry maximum punch if the notes hit simultaneously. But having uniform timing doesn't mean your *rhythms* have to be square: Groove the first part anyway you want—just make sure the subsequent overdubs lock up to it.

You'll get a full, lush sound if each line has a unique tone. These differences can be subtle: Each time you track a new part, switch pickup settings, or pick closer to the fretboard or bridge, or simply swap picks. For more dramatic timbral contrasts, change your guitar, amp, or effects, or try playing one line with a slide.

It's a good idea to record the primary melody first—it sets the sonic stage—and then fill in the supporting parts one layer at a time. If you have more than two tracks of guitar, it's wise to gradually reduce ornamentation—the hammers, pulls, slides, and bends—as you build your harmony. Another tip: Reserve the ear candy for the thinner strings, and let the thicker strings provide the beef. And for maximum protein, try doubling each part.

During mixdown, you can enhance the distinction between two lines by separating them in the stereo panorama. Lines that are rhythmically tight sound especially cool panned wide. Conversely, to make loose parts sound more cohesive, pan them closer.

—AE

Ex. 3

♩ = 138-144

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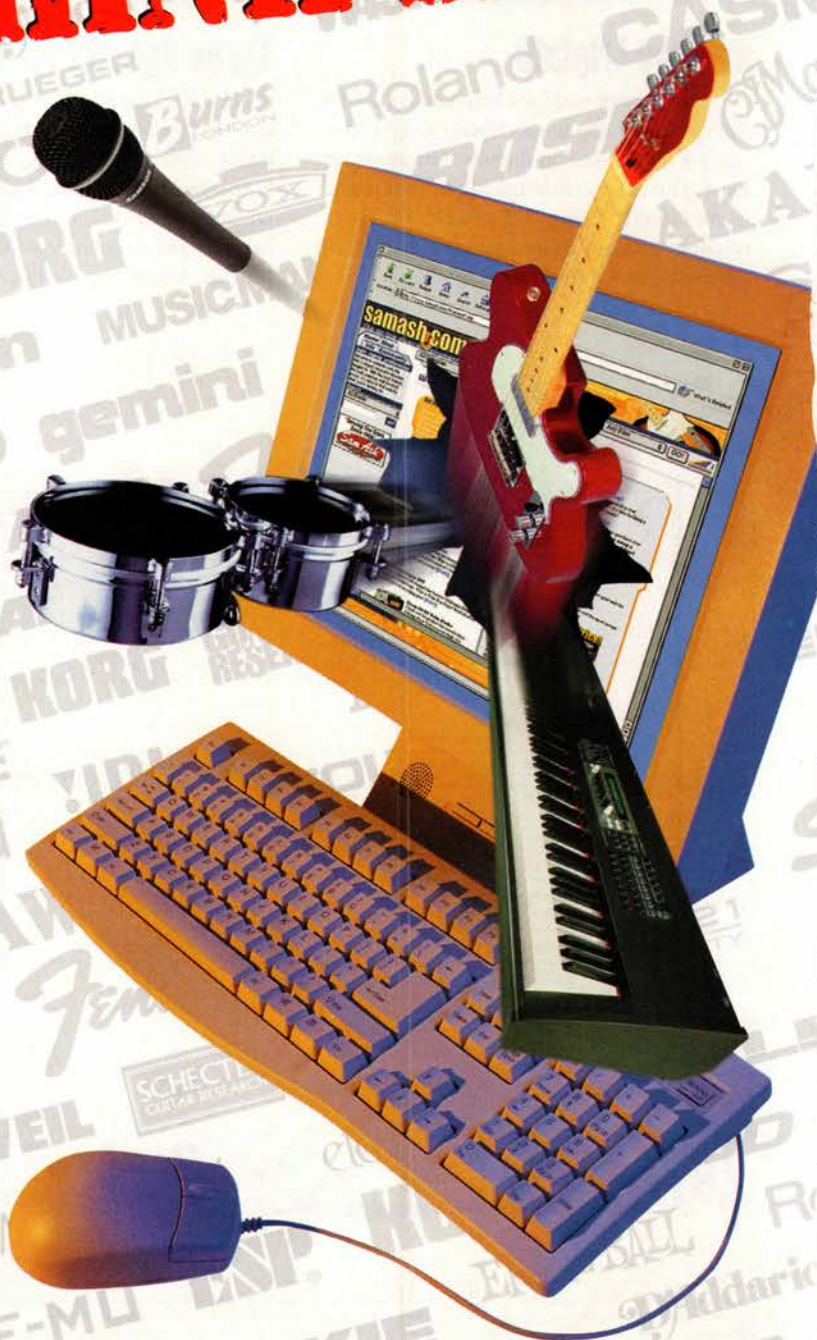


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twin tones and layered lines

Follow the Chord Tones

Pentatonic scales and arpeggiated triads provide useful tools for generating harmonized guitar parts, but sometimes a snazzy chord progression demands a more linear strategy. Take Ex. 6, for instance, which is inspired by the turnaround in the Allman

Brothers' "Hot 'Lanta."

In bars 1 and 2, four minor-7th chords descend chromatically. Allman and Betts simply track the progression in minor thirds: Gtr. 1 targets the ♭3 in each chord while Gtr. 2 plays the respective roots. This yields two stepwise lines—G, F♯, F♯, E, and E, D♯, D♯, and C♯—that underpin the passage. Notice how the savvy bros carefully insert a few additional notes to break up the straight descent and add melodic interest. Likewise, the hammer (bar 1) and bend (bar 2) supply rhythmic variation.

Diverging Paths

There's no law that says dual guitar lines

have to share the same melodic contours or rhythms. In Humble Pie's live "Four Day Creep," for instance, Steve Marriott and Peter Frampton often head in entirely different directions. Ex. 7 offers a glimpse of this action: While Marriott plays a straight blues riff—think Jimmy Reed meets Jimmy Page—Frampton rips into an extended E Mixolydian (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D or 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, ♭7) phrase. The music is raw and spontaneous, yet the parts fit like a glove.

Notice the contrary motion in bar 2's first beats. Frampton climbs in eighth-note triplets and Marriott descends in quarter-notes. Ultimately, Marriott hits a low E, while three octaves above, Frampton outlines an E chord by playing B (the 5) and then G♯ (the 3).

Ex. 6

♩ = 69-72
Flowing

Em7(Vm7) D♯m7 Dm7(IVm7) C♯m7 Am7(Im7)

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2



Ex. 7

♩ = 116-120
Raucous

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

twin tones and layered lines

Harmonized Harmony

On the same Humble Pie album (the essential *Performance—Rockin' the Fillmore*), Frampton and Marriott use another cool trick in Dr. John's "I Walk on Gilded Splinters." Ex. 8 captures the moves: Each guitarist plays a line

composed of sixth interval shapes. Because these lines begin a minor third apart, we hear four-note harmony.

While shifting positions within each line, keep both fingers glued to the strings as much as possible. This will help you hear and see the major- and minor-sixth shapes as you pluck them.

Triple Threat

Though less common than twin-guitar parts, triple-tracked lines sound amazing. Steely Dan's "Bodhisattva" features such rubbery harmony, courtesy of Denny Dias and Jeff Baxter. Ex. 9 offers a four-bar snapshot of this electric choir.

Scope it out—the intervals are all major and minor thirds. If you analyze the harmony, you'll find a chord on each beat: *G7* (B-D-F), *C* (C-E-G), *Dm* (D-F-A), *Am* (A-C-E), *G* (G-B-D), and *F* (F-A-C). But you couldn't get this singing, bowed effect by simply strumming these three-note voicings. Nope, the parts must be tracked as independent lines with their own bends,

Ex. 8

♩ = 108-112
Snappy

Gtr. 1

let ring

T
A
B

Gtr. 2

let ring

T
A
B

Ex. 9

♩ = 200-208
Fat & sassy

Gtr. 1

B

T
A
B

Gtr. 2

B

T
A
B

Gtr. 3

B

T
A
B

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Call and Response

Who knows more about layering harmonized guitar lines than Brian May? Derived from Queen's "Bicycle Race," Ex. 10 illustrates his cunning creativity. In this example, the two guitars play an elaborate game of hide-and-seek.

In bar 1, Gtr. 1 climbs through a *D* major scale. On the last eighth-note, Gtr. 2 chimes in with an *A* Mixolydian (*A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G*) run that rises through bar 2. May repeats this exchange and then picks up the pace in the next two bars by alternating snippets of *D* and *B* major scales

on every two beats. Bar 5 gets even more intense as the guitars swap half-step hammers before arcing into a tart major-second bend (*E-F#*).

Take your time working out this eight-bar passage. To make it sound righteous, you'll need to play with pinpoint accuracy.

Painting with Sound

Once you've digested these examples, you're ready to develop your own harmony parts—either with other guitarists or by multitracking à la Brian May. As you experiment, keep these tips in mind:

- To create a rich, chordal tapestry, use a mix

of major and minor thirds laced with occasional fourths. Or, for a more open sound, try layering major and minor sixths (which are inverted thirds).

- When you want to be harmonically ambiguous, use fourths and fifths. Fourth's are restless, fifth's are stable.

- For extra sparkle, work in an occasional major second, minor seventh, or major ninth.

- Octave and unisons add muscle without suggesting a counterline.

- Great twin-guitar harmony results from layering intriguing *melodies*, so think horizontally. Your textures will be vibrant and inspiring if each part sounds cool by itself.



When Joe Walsh (right) joined the Eagles in 1976, he brought a harder edge to the band. "Hotel California" tells the tale. Using a compressed, creamy sound, Don Felder took the first solo, while Walsh's sassy response featured a cutting humbucker tone.

Ex. 10

♩ = 160-168
Crisp & fluid

Chord progression: D A D B E F#

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

T A B

T A B

Tablature for Gtr. 1: 4 1 3 4 2 4 1 2, 4 1 3 4, 4 1 3 4, 1 2, 3 4 (bend), 12(14)

Tablature for Gtr. 2: 9 11 12, 10 12 9 10, 9 11 12, 6 8 9, 8 9, 12(14)

Tablature for Gtr. 2 (lower): 2 7 4 6 7, 12 14 15, 9 11 12, 11 12, 11(12)

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Jimmy Bones, keyboardist for Kid Rock with one of his Mackie 1642-VLZ PRO mixers. Photo by Randy G.

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SIZE MATTERS

BIG WRECK'S *Truckload of Tones*

BY MATT BLACKETT



he very first sound on Big Wreck's second album, *The Pleasure and the Greed* [Atlantic], is a gloriously complex, clean guitar tone. Then there's another tone, then another, and then another. By the time the record is finished, the listener has experienced dozens of guitar sounds, almost as many different tunings, and so many parts that it would be foolish to try to count them all. It's a powerful offering from four talented musicians. So who are these Big Wreck guys, anyway? ■ Big Wreck is

led by guitarist/singer/songwriter Ian Thornley, who hooked up with co-guitarist Brian Doherty and the rest of the band when they all attended Berklee College of Music. Eventually, jamming and recording took precedence over going to class, and Big Wreck was born. ■ The band's hard-rocking sophomore effort was produced by Dave Jerden, who has worked with Talking Heads, Alice in Chains, the Rolling Stones, and many others. *The Pleasure and the Greed* shows Thornley at his obsessive, compulsive best, with more guitar on one album than many people record in a lifetime. ➡

PHOTOGRAPH: MARGARET MALANDRUCCOLO

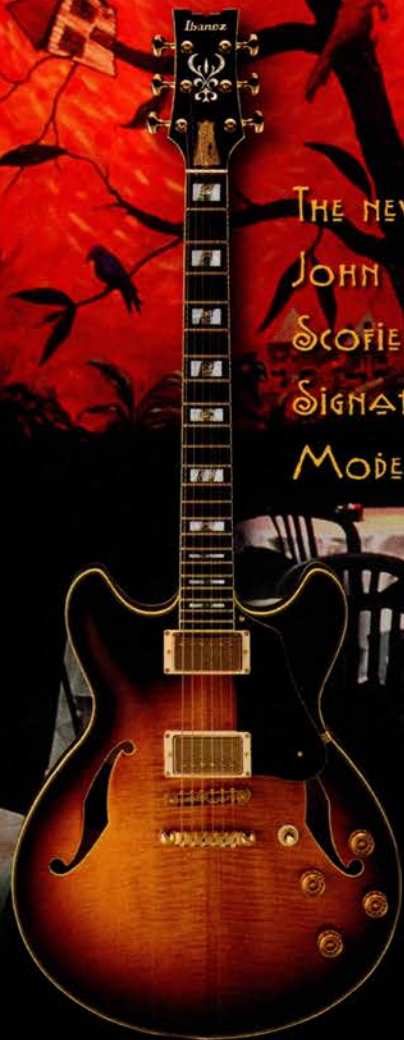


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speak to one another is what
I find exciting about music."

—IAN THORNLEY

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WORKS FOR ME



SIZE MATTERS

Okay, why so many guitar tones?

I've always been a fan of interesting sounds. On old Beach Boys records, Brian Wilson would mix a horn section with a banjo and a guitar, and somehow it all worked. I'm nowhere near Brian Wilson's level, but I do strive for that kind of instrumental depth—I just like to do it with guitars. Jimmy Page, for example, will have seven different guitars on a song, and you can hear each one. He's much better at orchestrating guitars than I am—I just throw them in there.

But you can certainly hear all the parts to your songs.

If I do it right, you can. I love doing contrapuntal stuff, and then plastering a catchy melody over the top. The song is like a big machine with all the parts meshing like gears.

Let's talk about some of these parts—what's the clean tone on "Inhale"?

For a lot of the clean tones, I used a combination of a Line 6 Pod and a '64 Fender Bandmaster. I would mic the Bandmaster, run the Pod direct, and then mix in varying degrees of the two depending on the tune. I set the Pod to the Black Panel setting, and used the normal chan-

nel of the Bandmaster. The guitar was the 12-string half of a Gibson doubleneck.

How many dirty tracks are in the verse?

Three. One is the 6-string of the doubleneck with the tone rolled off, and plugged into a Soldano and a 4x12 cabinet that was miked from 17 feet away. Then I doubled a Les Paul goldtop through a Marshall.

Another tone appears briefly at 1:44. It's clean, but with a real raspy edge.

That's a Jack Joseph Puig trick—he mixed "Inhale." It was the same Pod/Bandmaster setup, but we also ran through an Avalon mic pre and a Neve channel strip and cranked everything until it got crunchy. I love that clean/dirty interplay. I did more of that later in the song as kind of a joke in the call-and-response section. I had these huge, heavy chords and I answered them with the 12-string.

Anything else?

There is so much going on in that tune. There's actually one more tone where you can hear me picking behind the bridge. I just kept going and going.

Did your producer, Dave Jerden, ever put the brakes on you?

Yeah, he helped me edit myself. I had a lot of the album mapped out in my head, and it was tough for me to stray from that. But Dave has worked with all these great bands, so I listened to him. We ended up finding a great middle ground where he wouldn't let me spin out of control, but I could still do my thing.

Wrecking Balls

→ In addition to the myriad tones on *The Pleasure and the Greed*, Ian Thornley employs several alternate tunings. Low to high, here are some of his favorites—all of which sound a half-step lower than written. —MB

"Undersold"

D, A, D, A, A, D

"Knee Deep"

open Gm: D, G, D, G, Bb, D

"Everything Is Fine"

C, A, D, G, B, E

"Ladylike"

open Dm: D, A, D, F, A, D

"Ease My Mind"

C, G, E, G, C, E

"Head in the Girl"

E, A, E, A, A, E

"All Our Days Are Numbered"

open D: D, A, D, F#, A, D

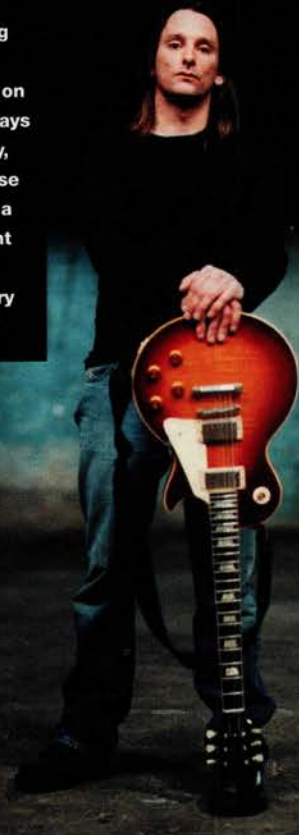
"West Virginia"

C, G, C, G, C, C

What tuning did you use for "Mistake"?

All of our tunings start off a half-step lower because we tune to Eb. The tuning on "Mistake" is one that I use a lot—open-G with a dropped C. I used a lot of open tunings on this record.

"I'll bring eight guitars on tour," says Doherty, "because there's a different tuning for every song."



Brian Doherty on his Role in the Wrecking Crew

→ As the co-guitarist in *Big Wreck*, Brian Doherty has the formidable task of finding his own space in Ian Thornley's thick mix of guitar parts. —MB

→ "Ian and I like a lot of the same music," says Doherty, "but our approaches are totally different. He plays with a much harder attack. I tend to play a little more relaxed, with lighter-gauge strings and a lighter pick."

"Because Ian wrote 90 percent of the album, he cut most of the parts in the studio. I played a Tele through a Vox AC15 on 'All by Design.' For 'Head in the Girl,' I used the same setup, but I added a Soldano to beef up the sound. I did the rhythm tracks to 'Broken Hands' with a Les Paul."

"I don't always play in the same tuning as Ian. I like what happens when he's in an open tuning and I have to find voicings in standard. The notes stack up in a cool way and you can get textures that would be impossible otherwise. If we are in the

same tuning, I'll use the middle pickup position and Ian will use the bridge—little things like that keep our parts distinct. I also run lower-wattage speakers than he does. I have two cabs loaded with Celestions: one with 25-watt Greenbacks, and one with Vintage 30s. Ian uses 75-watt speakers. My tone is a little more scooped in the mids than his, so when you combine the two, you get a good overall sound."

"Our songs are a challenge to pull off live because of all the layering. We're always thinking about that, and sorting through the parts to figure out which are the most important. We'll simplify some of them, and on a few tunes, we might even use samples. We don't want to cheat, but—come on—there are a lot of parts to these songs!"

SIZE MATTERS

The Pleasure and the Greed *doesn't* exactly have a droning, open-tuning vibe to it.

Our last record, *In Loving Memory Of*... had a lot of that droning quality, and I really like that. But you're right, this album has less of it. I think that's because I've been experimenting with taking a tuning in, say, open *Gm* but starting the tune in *Eb*. That's what I do in "No Fault." I also like to use an open-*G* tuning, but play the song in *D*. That way, when you go to the IV chord it's huge and open. You get a big lift from the IV chord anyway, but that way it's even bigger. Keith Richards does that a lot.

How did you get into open tunings?

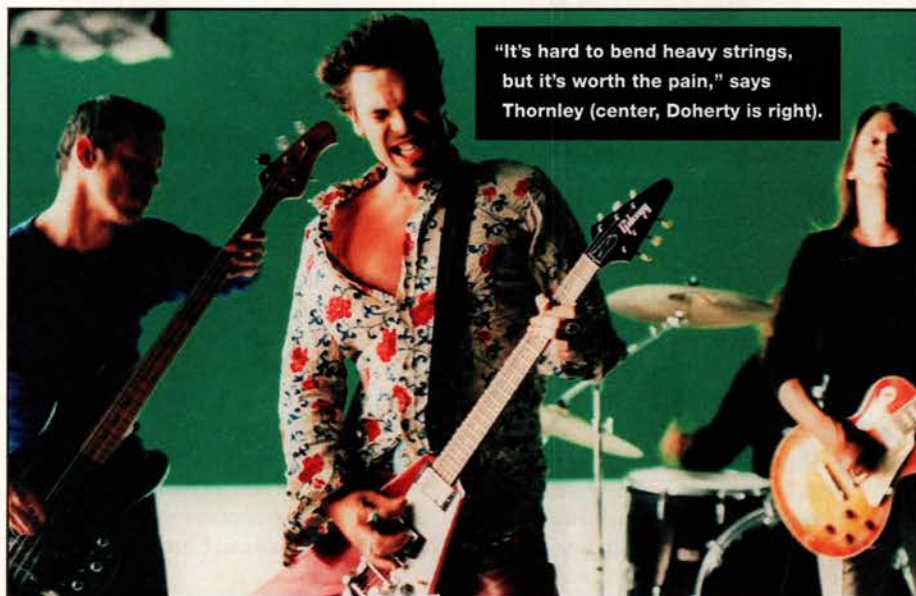
I started playing guitar in open tunings because they always seemed easier. When I went to Berklee and became a nerd, I spent all my time in standard tuning. When I finally went back to open tunings, it was really refreshing to just follow my ear and not think. I discover so much music with different tunings that I wouldn't otherwise. It's a great springboard. Of course, at this point, *standard* tuning is a great

springboard. I play a first-position *D* chord and I'm blown away!

If you write a song in open-Dm, will you solo in that tuning as well?

Well, "Ladylike" is in open-*Dm*, but for the recording, I soloed in standard tuning. When we play the tune live I'll have to solo in open-*Dm*, but it's not all that different. The top three strings are like standard, but a whole-step lower. I'll have to jump around a bit to use the three

"It's hard to bend heavy strings, but it's worth the pain," says Thornley (center, Doherty is right).



MARGARET MALANDRUCCOLO

low strings, though.

How did you write "Undersold"?

"Undersold" is actually two songs that were combined. The chorus—the three against four part—is from a song that I always loved because it reminded me of "Misty Mountain Hop." I love stealing from Zeppelin when I can get away with it. The arpeggiated part is from a totally different tune. I like how "Undersold" opens with one guitar straight up the middle, and then these huge

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SIZE MATTERS

12-strings come crashing in around it.

How will you divide up all those parts live?

We're stripping it down. Brian is playing the intro on acoustic, then I'll join in on clean electric, then Brian will switch to electric. It's going to be tricky to make it work because we don't have nine guitarists.

How did you get the sustain on "All by Design"?

I played a semi-hollowbody by a company called Mouradian. I plugged into a Tube Screamer and a Vox AC15. Then I found the right spot in the room to get the feedback—which was easy because the Mouradian really wants to sing.

There's a really sustainy guitar in "Defined by What We Steal," too.

I used a Fernandes Sustainer—that thing is a lot of fun.

What's going on in "The Pleasure and the Greed"?

The intro is distorted bass. For my guitar sound, I plugged into a Garnet Herzog pre-amp—which I think is what Randy Bachman used for the lead on "American Woman." I ran that into an Ampeg SVT. My friend Gordie

from Big Sugar turned me on to that setup, because that's his sound: Herzog preamp, SVT, and a Marshall cab. It's the loudest thing I've ever heard.

I also used a Bernie amp, which is made out of an old film projector—it has a really wonky tone. I blended the Bernie with a tweed Deluxe and cranked them.

How much gear will you take on the road to reproduce all these guitar sounds?

To accommodate all the various tunings I'll bring about 15 guitars, including three Les Pauls, a few semi-hollowbodies, a Gibson 6/12 double-neck, a Hammertone double-neck with a 6-string and a mando-guitar, and a bunch of other instruments. For amps, I'll bring a Matchless Super Chief 120 and two JCM 2000s—a 50- and a 100-watt—and I'll run four 4x12 cabs.

What about effects?

I use a Digital Music Corp. GCX unit to control my rack, which contains an old Boss compressor, a TS-9 Tube Screamer, a Prescription Electronics Experience pedal, an Electro-Harmonix Micro-Synth, the Garnet Herzog, a Boss DD-5 for backwards delay, a Lexicon reverb, an Alesis Quadverb, and a DigiTech Whammy pedal.

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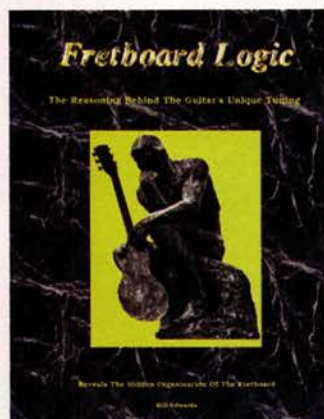
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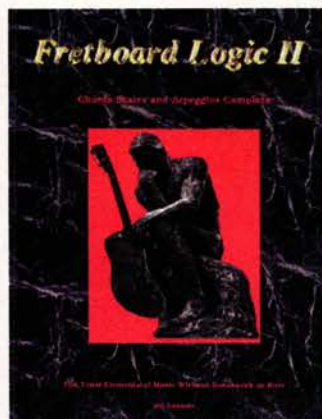
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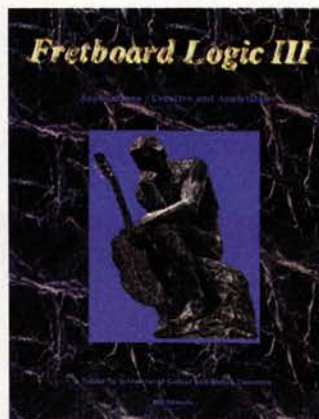
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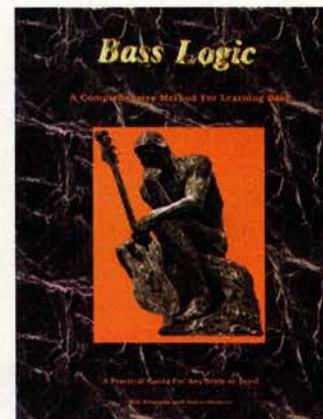
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"With a lot of the music out there now, you hear some great songs, wicked rhythms, and cool tones. But no one's really soloing. Soloing is dying out."—Dean DeLeo

DISSED DERAILED & STILL STANDING



Remember the early '90s? Pop metal was dead, grunge was king, and bands like Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, and Soundgarden ruled the airwaves. All of those bands had certain things in common: They hailed from Seattle, wrote some great tunes that drew on classic rock, punk, and psychedelia, and they (or their supporters) lambasted the Stone Temple Pilots for stealing their sound. The Seattle bands have something else in common now—they're either defunct or less relevant than in their heyday. But not STP. The Southern

DEAN DELEO
CO-PILOTS
STP'S ROCK
AND ROLL
SURVIVAL

BY MATT BLACKETT



DISSED DERAILED & STILL STANDING

California quartet is not only still around, but its members are at the top of their game as

songwriters, players, and live musicians. How is that possible when the band's demise has been foretold a thousand times over?

First and foremost, it's the tunes. Guitarist Dean DeLeo and his bandmates (brother/bassist Robert, singer Scott Weiland, and drummer Eric Kretz) have consistently written melodic, memorable tunes. Next, it's the tones. DeLeo gets guitar sounds that no one else gets—tones that somehow rage with distortion without ever losing clarity. Then there's all those clever, thoughtful guitar parts. The DeLeo brothers introduced voicings into the hard-rock lexicon that hardly existed before, and, in the process, got zillions of kids and bar-band guitarists playing diminished and m7 \flat 5 chords.

Above all, STP is a real band that can pull it off live. Their shows are an almost non-stop string of hits, wall-to-wall guitar, and great melodies. Through all of the media criticism—not to mention the tabloid dramas when the band was faced with losing a talented and charismatic frontman—all the STP guys have done is continue to hone their craft.

Today, the Stone Temple Pilots are healthy, happy, and at the very pinnacle of the hard-rock heap. The band's new album, *Shangri-La Dee Da* [Atlantic], might be the strongest of their career—it has everything you would expect from an STP record, only more and better. And from a guitar standpoint, DeLeo has never sounded more confident, adventurous, and just plain cool.

You've written more songs for Shangri-La Dee Da than past STP albums.

I have more tunes on this record than I've ever had, and I'm not sure how it came about, man. We always track a bunch of tunes and then ask, "Which 12 or 13 tunes are going to make this record all it can be?" If that means leaving off some of my tunes—or some of Robert's—that's how it is. No ego. It's never about any one of us as an individual.

How else does this record differ from your previous releases?

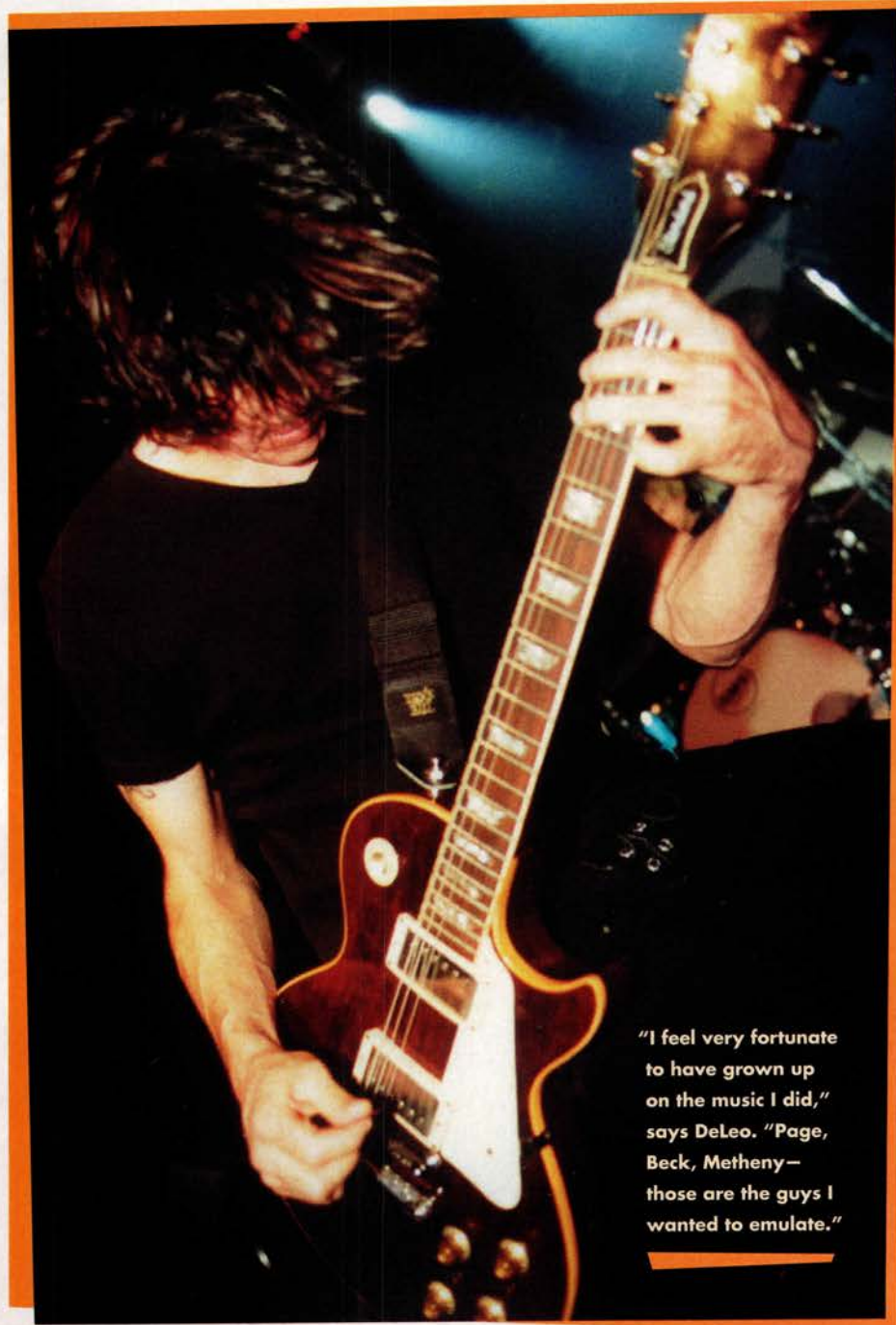
For starters, it was tracked very differently because we used the studio for preproduction. We had never multitracked our ideas before—we usually just ran a DAT in our rehearsal room. This time, however, we recorded the demos to a click track. Then, when Brendan [O'Brien, *Shangri-La Dee Da* producer] showed up, he could decide whether to use some of the tracks for the album. We really honed in on certain sounds when we were demoing the songs, and we knew it would be hard to recreate them. There's always the danger of chasing the demo's tail. Trying will drive you nuts.

Did you keep any of the demo tracks for "Days of the Week"?

No, and I wish we did. The demo had more of what I wanted from a guitar standpoint—just a single guitar. The album version had two electric tracks and a Guild jumbo 12-string. I think Brendan thought the demo was a little light. He wanted to make the song more rock and less pop.

Are you okay with the change?

Sure—the song sounds great. But I do think our fans and our record label aren't always willing to let us be what we want to be. That's why we might end up doing something with the demo anyway. After the record has been out for a while, I'd like to make some of the demos available on stonetemplepilots.com. On tunes where I cut a few different solos—such as "Hello It's Late" and "Dumb Love"—people could



"I feel very fortunate to have grown up on the music I did," says DeLeo. "Page, Beck, Metheny—those are the guys I wanted to emulate."

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choose solo number one, two, or three. I think that would be really cool.

What gear did you use to track "Days of the Week"?

For the verses, I played a Strat through a little solid-state Kustom combo and a Vox AC15. In the choruses, I played a Les Paul Special with P-90s through a Sovtek Mig 50 and a 4x12 cab.

What was the songwriting process like for that tune?

There's a funny story behind "Days of the Week." I heard a rumor that Sheryl Crow want-

ed to write some songs with me. I was really flattered because no one had ever contacted me to write with them. I wrote "Days of the Week" for her—I never intended to bring it to the band. One night I played it for Scott and he really wanted to take a shot at it. Well, Sheryl never called, so I let him.

The part that opens "Dumb Love" is a pretty jarring way to start a record. How did you play that?

I'm in dropped-D and playing at the 10th fret. I just grab the two bottom strings and

ROBERT DELEO'S SIBLING REVELRY



Although he's STP's bassist, Robert DeLeo is a fine guitarist and has written some of the band's biggest hits. Here he shares his thoughts on songwriting, guitars, and being in a band with his brother.

—MB

• • • • •

Do you always write on guitar?

Almost always, although I'll sometimes write on piano. For example, I wrote "Hello It's Late" on guitar for the *Purple* sessions, but we never used it. For *Shangri-La Dee Da*, I played the riff on keyboards, and that brought out a lot of interesting voicings for the guitar to work against.

Do you tend to write on a certain guitar?

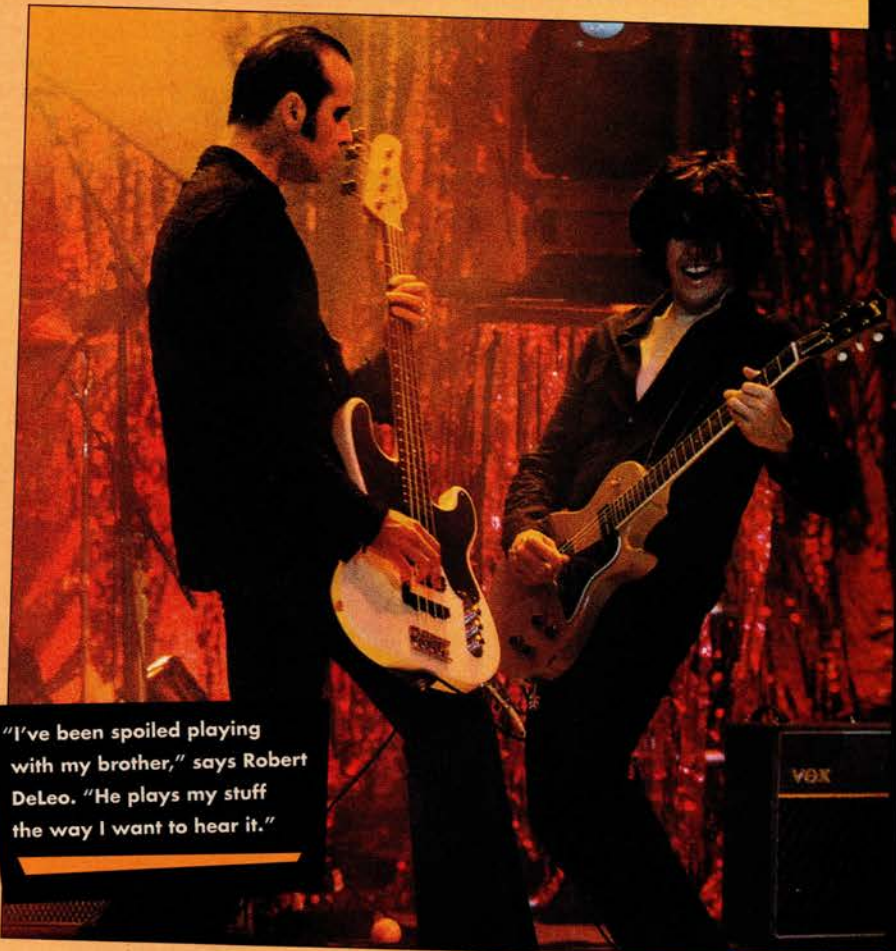
I have an old Yamaha acoustic that I like to write on, and I have an old Harmony that's in Nashville tuning. I'll occasionally write in that tuning to come up with something a little different. I also do a lot of writing on my \$70 Mexican nylon string.

When you wrote "Interstate Love Song" and "Plush" with all those thick voicings, were you trying to push the chordal envelope for hard rock?

No—it felt perfectly natural to me because of the wide background of music I listen to. I love Joao Gilberto and Jobim, and "Interstate" grew out of that. [Plays "Interstate" on nylon string, with bossa groove.] We changed the groove, put distortion on it, and voila. The voicings you're talking about wouldn't have seemed unusual 30 years ago, but it's a different time for music now. The roots don't come from the same dirt.

What other guitarists influenced your songwriting?

Jimmy Page. The impact he had on writing, playing, and tone still blows my mind. I also like Lindsay Buckingham, Robbie Krieger, and



"I've been spoiled playing with my brother," says Robert DeLeo. "He plays my stuff the way I want to hear it."

Jeff Beck. Beck didn't write many tunes back in the day, but *Blow by Blow* was a tremendous influence on me. And I love Steve Howe. I'm a big prog-rock fan, and that influence shows up in "Regeneration."

What's it like playing in a band with your brother?

I love it. There's a healthy competition between us when it comes to songwriting, and I think that really helps the tunes. Dean is my favorite guitarist. He plays my stuff better than anyone, and I think he's one of the most underrated guitarists in the world.

DISSED DERAILED & STILL STANDING

bend the power chords. The bending goes through the whole riff.

How did you get that tone?

I don't remember what guitar I played, but the amp rig was my old standby—a Demeter preamp into a VHT power amp. Then I did another pass playing through the Sovtek and the AC15.

So how many tracks total?

Just two—the Demeter on one track and the Sovtek/Vox setup on the other. When I record through two amps, I'll almost always put them on a single track. If we get a sound we like, we'll commit to it right there.

When will you not put the amps on a single track?

When I want a new tone, but I don't want it to sound like an overdub, I'll track through two amps, and record them on different tracks. Then I'll use one tone for the verse, and bring in the other tone when the chorus hits. That way, I get the energy of the same performance throughout the tune, but I can choose between two different amp tones. We did that a lot on *Tiny Music*.

Going back to "Dumb Love," that solo is pretty twisted.

I had done some normal-sounding solos, but Brendan was really fond of that one. He loves it when a part sounds semi-broken—like it's just about to fall off the cliff. That solo was com-

pletely off the cuff—I didn't even mean it. We had a good laugh, and then we used it.

What's the modulation effect on the solo?

We nicked that effect from Joe Perry's solo to "Walk this Way." During the mix, we ran my track through an old 1/2" tape machine to produce this really wide stereo slapback. It made the part sound more interesting.

Speaking of interesting, how did you get that gated guitar sound for the intro to "Coma"?

That's not guitar, it's Scott's voice! It's hard to believe. I don't know how he did the gating, because that part is from a demo he recorded a year ago. We pitch-shifted the track from E to D, which made it sound even less like a voice. Then we "Neved" it to death—we ran it through a Neve preamp that was cranked to add some distortion. I love that part.

Let's talk about your slide playing on the new record. Do you have a favorite guitar for slide?

Yeah—it's a Premier from the late '50s. It has the oddest shape. It's kind of like Prince's guitar—where the top horn is like a scroll—but mine is less psychedelic. It has an all-rosewood neck, a thin body, and a single pickup right at the neck that makes the strings sound like bridge cables. Just huge! I used that guitar for the slide solo in "Wonderful," and played through an Ampeg BX-12—a 2x12 flip-top amp that's real uncommon. I also played the Premier for the slide part in "A Song for Sleeping."

Did you use any other weird amps for the sessions?

Oh yeah. On "Too Cool Queenie" I played a Danelectro through a 12-watt Gretsch amp from the '50s that has a 6x9 speaker. It was very bright, and totally unique sounding. That amp is on the choruses. For the verses, I played a Strat through a Line 6 Pod set to the Brit Class A setting. Pods never seem to get enough high end for me, so I cranked the treble and mids and rolled the bass back. On the bridge, I introduced another tone with my P-90 Les Paul plugged into a Supro combo.

Are you sure that's enough gear for one song?

Here's the funny part—that song tells a nice little story, has a couple of choruses, a bridge, and a solo, and it's only 2:40. If you can't say it in three minutes, get the hell out.

But come on, you listen to a lot of music that goes on longer than three minutes.

Of course. Zeppelin, Crimson, and Yes' *Tales from Topographic Oceans*. Whoa!

What would STP sound like if Brendan O'Brien didn't produce the albums?

We've asked ourselves that a bunch of times, and I don't know the answer. He has played a huge part in all of our records. We get a song 90 to 95 percent of the way there, and he'll add the little sprinklings that take it to the next level.

What's an example of one of his "sprinklings" on Shangri-La Dee Da?

On "Wonderful" there are these Brian

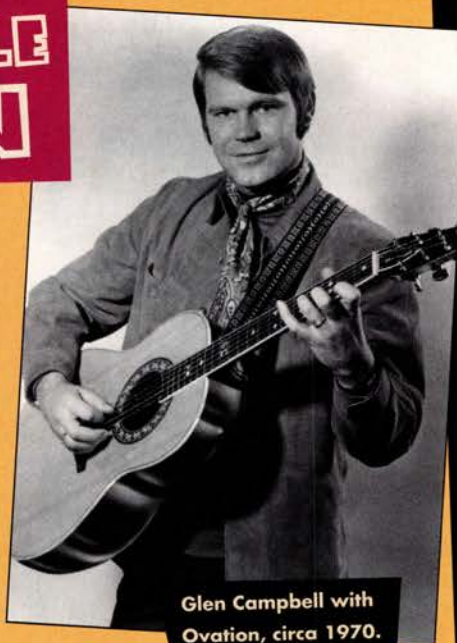
STONE TEMPLE LINEMAN



TP fans know that the band listens to Led Zeppelin. They also know the guys are great admirers of the Doors, King Crimson, and the Stones. But it's not common knowledge that the DeLeo brothers are huge, unabashed Glen Campbell freaks.

"What a great player Glen is," gushes Dean DeLeo. "I've always loved his guitar playing and singing. His son, Cal, is a fan of ours and he came to a show and brought Glen. When we were recording *Shangri-La Dee Da*, we had a film crew at the studio, and Glen and Cal paid us a visit. With me on guitar, Robert on bass, Eric on drums, Brendan on Rhodes, and Glen playing Danelectro Longhorn 6-string bass, we did one of the coolest versions of 'Wichita Lineman.' After we cut that tune—I'm not making this up, we have it on film—a rainbow came out over the house. On the tape you can see how it affected us—we're all teary eyed. It was unbelievable.

"Then Robert grabbed my guitar, gave me his bass, and Cal got on the drums for



Glen Campbell with
Ovation, circa 1970.

'By the Time I get to Phoenix.' Glen sang his ass off, and then played this unbelievable solo. I had never played the song, so Robert was yelling out the changes to me. It was pretty spectacular, man. We documented the entire making of *Shangri-La Dee Da*—including the stuff with Glen—and when we get around to it, we're going to put a nice little film together. I don't know what we'll do with it. It might be just something to show the grandkids."

—MB



MATT TILLMAN,
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Wilson-style vocal harmonies in the second verse that were Brendan's idea. In the bridge

there's this cool Mellotron line—that's also Brendan. These are small things, but how they accentuate the tune is huge. And, of course, his mixes are amazing. He's not a smoke and mirrors guy—he's pure raw talent.

If Robert writes a guitar riff, how closely will you stick to his original idea?

Robert is really good about letting me own a part and run with it. We all try to be that way. Otherwise, the part wouldn't be as meaningful to whoever is playing it. Scott told me early on, "I'd have a hard time singing your lyrics—I could never mean it." We all respect that immensely. Robert played a lot of acoustic guitar on this record, and I never said, "Hey—that's my gig." Nobody ever feels like they're get-

ting their toes stepped on.

You've always had a knack for playing really thick voicings with lots of distortion, yet you never lose definition. How do you do that?

It has to do with finding the sweet spot on your amp where you have saturation, but not over-saturation. It also involves how hard you attack the strings, and how close to the bridge you pick. It's really important to hear every string—and to keep the fidelity of each note in the chord. When I play live, I run my tried and true Demeter/VHT setup, but I also run a Vox AC30 nice and clean, and the sound man blends them together.

What did you listen to that first inspired you to play music?

Robert and I have older brothers and sisters, so, as a kid, I could walk down the hall and hear Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young coming out of one room, and the Mamas and the Papas out of another. Out of my brother's room, I'd hear Hendrix. From my mom, I got Bacharach, Andy Williams, and the Cowells. I loved Zepelin, the Stones, and Sabbath, and then I loved the Carpenters and Glen Campbell. All of that stuff inspires me to this day.

Do you feel any sort of vindication to have outlasted the bands that took so many potshots at you guys early in your career?

Not at all. If you're talking about the bands I think you're talking about, I'm friends with most of those guys now.

I'm talking about Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden...

I don't have a vindictive bone in my body over that stuff. I always knew what we had as a band. I did think it was unfair for certain people to base their opinion of us on one album, or on a couple of songs. I mean, talk to me in ten years, you know? But I never wished for any band's demise. I thought those bands made some great music that wasn't disposable or fabricated.

Do you find it ironic that so many new bands sound like STP?

I find it flattering.

You've always taken the high road, even when your band was in serious jeopardy. How do you feel about the future now?

Man, I feel great about it. I know more than ever what we've got as a band. Scott and I are leaving tomorrow for a promotional tour of Europe—just him, me, and an acoustic guitar. When you can take everything away from a tune except vocals and an acoustic guitar and still have a tune, that means something. We can do that with almost every one of our songs, and I'm really proud of that.

Being a musician has always been my dream, and I never let it go away. I didn't sign my recording contract until I was 30. Everyone was asking when I was going to grow up, and I said this was it for me. I wanted to do what I'm doing right now more than draw my next breath.

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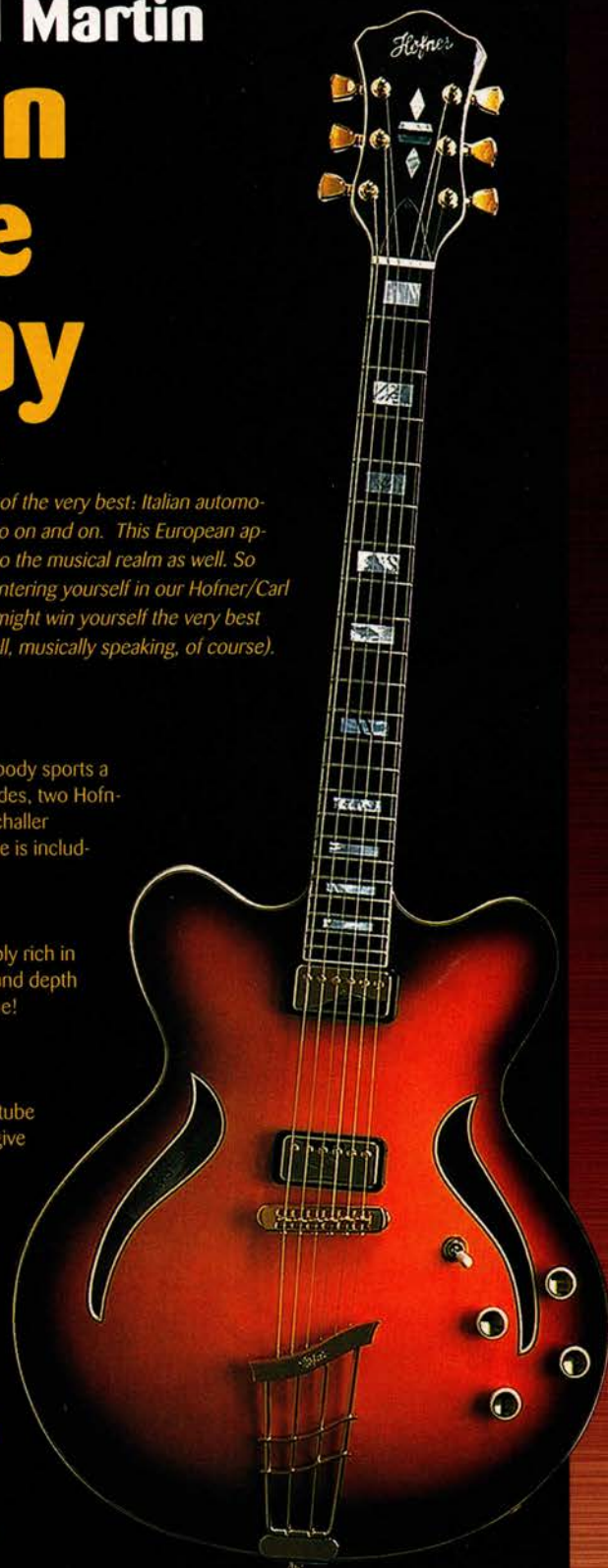
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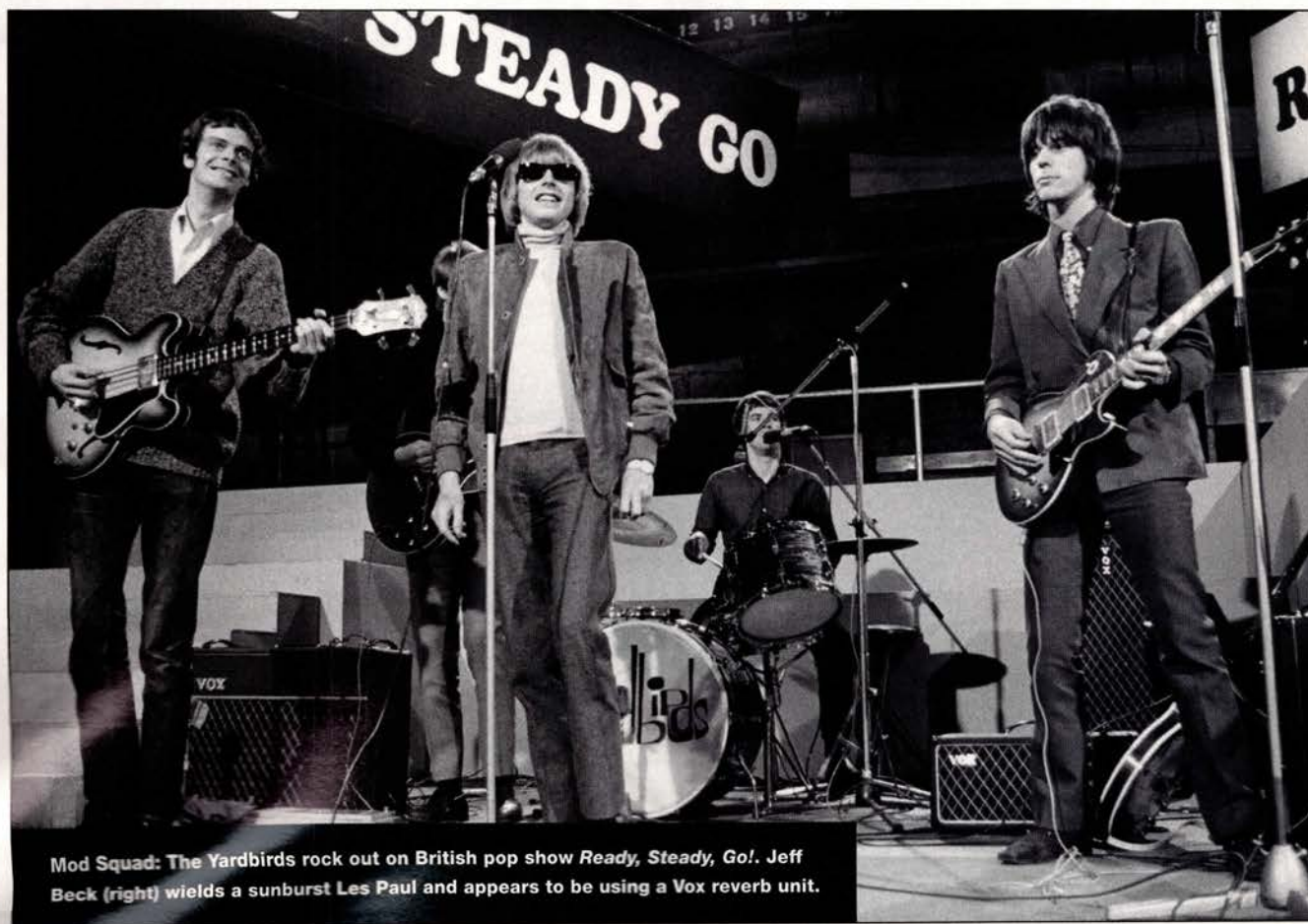
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Reviews British Invaders



Mod Squad: The Yardbirds rock out on British pop show *Ready, Steady, Go!*. Jeff Beck (right) wields a sunburst Les Paul and appears to be using a Vox reverb unit.

AUDIO



The Yardbirds *Ultimate!*

As the shock troops of the British Invasion, the Yardbirds had a huge impact on the evolution of rock and roll. During the band's five-year reign, it revolutionized the airwaves with hits such as "For

your Love," "I'm a Man," "I Ain't Got You," "Heart Full of Soul," and "Shapes of Things"—songs that heralded the psychedelic era and introduced jamming and heavy guitar to legions of musicians that would follow in the Yardbirds' footsteps. And though the group's biggest claim to fame may be that its alumni included three of the most influential lead guitarists of the 20th century—Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page—it's how the band shaped its sound to accommodate the bodacious talents of these players that lies at the heart of the Yardbirds' legacy. *Ultimate!* chronicles the Yardbirds history from 1964 to 1968, and showcases many of the band's finest guitar moments.

The two-CD set opens with a selection of tunes from the Clap-

ton era, which spanned October 1963 to March 1965. Clapton's ultra-clean tone on the early demos "Boom Boom" and "Honey in your Hips" contrasts with his fuzzier sound on later singles such as "A Certain Girl," "Got to Hurry," and the ripping "I Ain't Got You." His gutsy wails on the explosive cuts recorded at London's Marquee Club in 1964 also highlight what an advanced blues-rock guitarist Clapton was at this period. Witness his fiery solos on "Too Much Monkey Business," his cool grooves on "Smokestack Lightning," and his rave-up riffing on "Here 'Tis," and it's easy to see why fans started tagging English walls with "Clapton is God."

When Beck was brought in to replace Clapton in March '65, no one could possibly have imagined

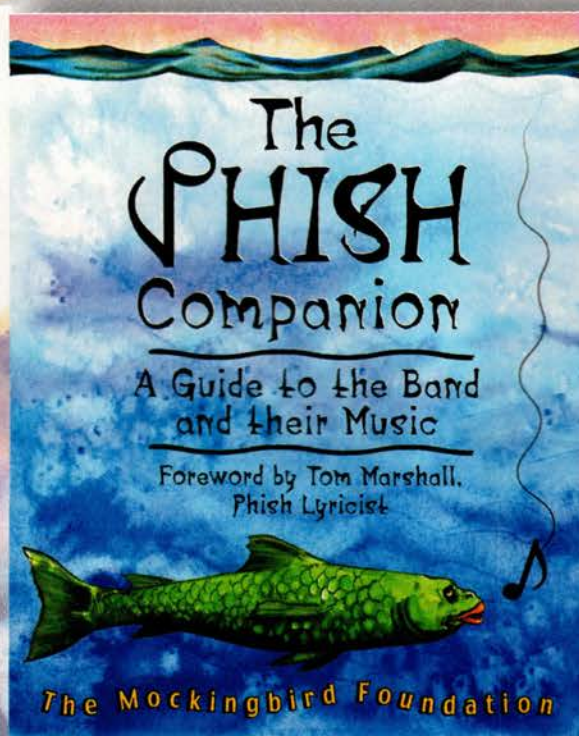
what a catalyst he would be in the Yardbirds' metamorphosis from bluesy popsters to avant-garde rockers. Beck's slide playing on "Stealed Blues" (a warm-up instrumental from his first session with the group) and "I Ain't Done Wrong" barely hint at the 6-string pyrotechnics he would soon unleash on songs such as "Shapes of Things" (dig his groovy, Middle East-scented lead break), "Jeff's Boogie" (pure double-tracked fury), "Over Under Sideways Down" (snaky, Arabic-style fuzz guitar), and the psychedelic climax to "I'm A Man," where Beck wraps up his solo with 16 bars of furious scratching. And that's just the beginning. During the 20 months he served in the Yardbirds, Beck altered the course of rock guitar with powerful

“THE BIGGEST CULT BAND IN AMERICA!”

-Entertainment Weekly

Foreword by Phish lyricist
Tom Marshall

While Phish takes some well-earned time off, *The Phish Companion* keeps you going. Written by and for Phish fans, this is the most complete, factual, and fun guide to Phish ever published. It explores the band's entire 17-year history—all the songs, all the shows—right through October 7, 2000, their last performance before going on sabbatical.



Thousands of fans (including you?) submitted Phish info via the Internet to help create *The Phish Companion*. Fact-checked with the support of official Phish sources, and incorporating data never before published in print or online, this guide has the scoop on:

- Every song Phish has ever played
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Reviews

excursions on cuts such as "What Do You Want," "Lost Woman," "The Nazz are Blue" (a "Dust My Broom" remake with Beck on lead vocals), "Rack My Mind," and the very psychedelic "Hot House of Omagarashid."

In June 1966, Page joined the Yardbirds—initially to fill the bass position vacated by Paul Samwell-Smith. For a brief period, Page and Beck shared the lead-guitar spotlight. We're treated to the result of this union on

two cuts: the futuristic "Happenings Ten Years Ago" and "Stroll On"—a "Train Kept A-Rollin'" remake that's awash in killer playing by both guitarists.

After Beck's departure in October 1966, Page graced the last Yardbirds recordings with his signature licks—so signature, in fact, that they're easy to pick out on later Led Zeppelin tracks. For example, Page lays down a blistering rhythm groove on the intro to "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor" that sounds a lot like what he plays on "Song Remains the Same." Echoes of his lovely, British Isles-style acoustic playing on the Yardbirds'

"White Summer" also reverberate on Zep's "Black Mountain Side." And on "Think About It," Page cuts loose with a barrage of licks that he recycles nearly verbatim for the roaring solo break of "Dazed and Confused."

With its 50 songs and informative liner notes, *Ultimate!* is an apt title for this superb tribute to one of Britain's most significant musical exports. Wrestling the group's extensive and confusing discography into an orderly package is a formidable task, but thanks to the effort put into creating this set, we can sit back and simply dig the never-to-be-re-

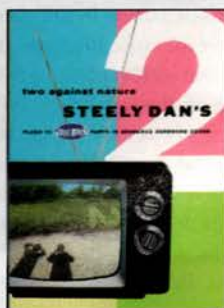
peated magic that occurred when Clapton, Beck, and Page were Yardbirds. **Rhino.**

—ART THOMPSON

Dennis Brennan

Rule No. 1

Dennis Brennan's songs are literate and edgy. His stories unfold slowly, and he rarely spares the gory details. If a songwriter like that is going to have a guitarist on his record, the player better be ready to deliver the whole truth and nothing but. Small wonder that Brennan enlisted guitarist Duke Levine to testify on *Rule No. 1*. Best known for his work



Steely Dan

Jazz-Rock Party

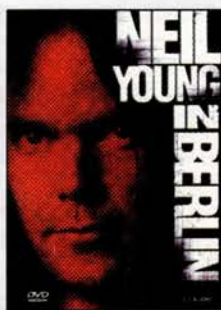
Filmed in January, 2000, for a PBS special, *Jazz-Rock Party* contains more documentary footage than the PBS presentation, and delivers the concert in Dolby 5.1 surround. Here, Walter Becker and Donald Fagen lead a 13-piece ensemble through Steely Dan favorites such as "Green Earrings," "Babylon Sisters," and "Bad Sneakers," as well as five tunes from their Grammy-winning album *Two Against Nature*.

Becker proves that the steady stream of guitar soloists the group famously employed is no longer needed—his playing exhibits confidence and swagger. Meanwhile, co-guitarist Jon Herington handles the solos on classics such as "Kid Charlemagne" and "Black Friday" with a Carlton-esque tone and a more aggressive approach. It's a cool yin and yang.

Throughout *Jazz-Rock Party*, Becker and Fagen erase any

notions of being stodgy jazz/rockers. They jokingly interview their band members, and talk about guitar collecting ("It's a fetish that has its roots in inadequate mothering," says Fagen). *Jazz-Rock Party* is a slick portrait of a legendary act that keeps on delivering the goods. **Image.**

—DF



Neil Young

Neil Young in Berlin

After years of being brainwashed with heavily edited concert specials, corporately co-opted live-production extravaganzas, and scripted on-stage spontaneity, it's kind of cool to watch a band of tragically dressed dorks totally *rage*. This 1983 concert is culled from Young's somewhat baffling *Trans* tour, where the guitar icon donned sunglasses, skinny ties, and a head mic that processed his voice through a Vocoder. (Don't be fooled by the DVD packaging that displays the scruffy, outlaw version of

Mr. Young.) Further head-scratching moments include co-guitarist Nils Lofgren's incessant hummingbird-like darting between musicians, Young and Lofgren making like mad puppets during solo breaks, and a few vocal "moments" that probably inspired live-sound engineers to bring pitch correction to the concert stage.

However, Young seems to be having a blast, his guitar playing is full of wrath and beauty, and the band rocks. The audio quality is stunning—every instrument registers loud and clear—although the expansiveness of the 5.1 remix is just average. The rear speakers are awash in cymbal splashes, hi-hat bleed, and crowd noise, and fail to evoke the roar and rumble of an arena show. Despite boisterous live versions of "Cinnamon Girl," "The Needle and the Damage Done," and "Hey Hey My My," the less remarkable *Trans* tunes—as well as the DVD's dearth of special features and documentation—make *Neil Young in Berlin* a collector's item for serious fans only. **Rhino.**

—MM

Pearl Jam

Touring Band 2000

A musical travelogue of shows from the grunge juggernaut's 2000 U.S. tour, *Touring*



D V D

Band's documentary-style footage highlights the band's lack of charisma. Pearl Jam fans obviously embrace Eddie Vedder's laconic, tortured-poet routine, but someone like James Brown might mistake him for a mic stand.

More exciting are the DVD's 5.1 concert mixes, which pump a lot of crowd noise and reverberation into the rear speakers to envelop the home-theater listener. Another cool trick is that Vedder's voice is mixed to the center of the front left and right speakers, and the actual center speaker is used solely for ambience—as if a mic was placed far above the band.

In addition, *Touring Band* is rich with special features. You get tons of backstage stuff, two bonus music videos, fan footage, a "Matt cam" perspective that spotlights drummer Matt Cameron, featurettes on several tour cities, and more. If you dig Pearl Jam, you'll get a lot of what you dig. **Sony Music.**

—MM

Reviews

with singer/songwriters Jonatha Brooke and Mary Chapin Carpenter—and for his own brilliant instrumental albums—Levine is a master of visceral electric tones, and he plays tasty parts, fills, and solos with a level of heart and soul that most players only dream of. *Esca*. —AL



Simon Says
Shut Your Breath

Although Simon Says falls squarely into the new metal category, the Sacramento-based quartet is trying to give the somewhat maligned genre a musical makeover. Guitarist Zac Diebels

plays a huge part in his group's desire to skirt convention. He isn't content to simply throw out scooped-mid, detuned riffs—his fondness for atmospheric delays and stuttering tremolo adds sonic dimension to the record's 12 tracks. Diebels' parts also display clever rhythmic twists and tonal subtleties. At times, he'll back off the distortion to great effect, sporting a slightly skinnier tone that proves you don't always have to bludgeon the listener to be intense. *Hollywood*. —DF



David Mead
Mine and Yours

David Mead's stellar vocals and clever songwriting have consistently overshadowed his inventive guitar playing, and *Mine and*

Yours, his second release, will probably reinforce that fact. Still, Mead's latest effort is full of great 6-string work—killer slide playing, pristine acoustics, and ringing electrics—all beautifully layered. *Mine and Yours* is on the mellow side—fans of Mead's more rocking debut will need to lighten up just a little. But the melodies, orchestration, and production that made his first album so cool are all here and then some. Tunes such as "Flamin' Angel," "No One Left to Blame," and "Venus Again" can hang with Mead's best work, and should appeal to followers of smart pop who embrace the suggestive, rather than the overt. *RCA*. —MB

Danny Gatton and Robert Gordon
Capitol Attack

Any unreleased Danny Gatton recording is a newsworthy event in the guitar-freak community, and this live set is no exception. Culled from a show at the Wax Museum in Wash-



ington D.C., on January 5, 1983, *Capitol Attack* [available at homestead.com/renegaderecords/RENEGADE-RECORDS.html] shows the eclectic Gatton with his rockabilly hat on. He goes to town on "Mystery Train," "Twenty Flight Rock," and "Heart Like a Rock" with plenty of twang, clang, and righteous slapback. Gatton's trademark chops and maniacal chromaticism are in full swing on several cuts. Because the recording quality of *Capitol Attack* is on the raw side, it nails the feel of a sweaty bar gig in a cool, loose way. Because Gatton zealots want to hear every note he ever played, this is a must-have for fans of the late Tele-master. *Renegade*. —MB

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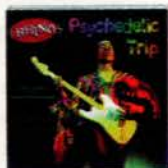
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Bench Tests

Warp Drive

DigiTech GNX1

By Michael Molenda

For some, the quest for transcendent tone begins and ends with one guitar, one amp, and a heart full of soul. While anyone who constructs a signature, killer sound with barebones tools should be saluted, modern tone bombasts are typically constructed from layers of different guitar and amp

combinations. (Classic examples of layering include Brian May's multitracked guitar symphonies with Queen, and the multiple-amp setups of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Johnson.) And although some one-guitar/one-amp zealots may disagree, layering is far from an easy way to produce unique, mammoth, and/or

Snapshot

DigiTech's GNX1 (\$499) offers 15 amp models, eight cabinet simulations, and a chunk of other goodies. But the big news is a Warp feature that lets you blend the characteristics of two separate amp/cabinet models to build "hybrid" amps. As it's a tech marvel *and* a powerful tone-shaping tool, the GNX1 wins an Editors' Pick Award.

ambient tones.

Onstage, you'll need two or three amps, a Medusa-like tangle

of cables, a switching system, and some way to blend the disparate tones to taste. In the studio, things get even wackier. Add multiple microphone setups, even *more* amp and guitar choices, a cornucopia of signal-processing options, and sheets upon sheets of track listings and recording notes. As a studio rat, I absolutely adore the creative possibilities offered by layering, but the logistics of moving amps and mics around often replaces inspiration with fatigue.

Not anymore. In a marvelous convergence of real-world smarts and technological gymnastics, DigiTech's GNX1 (\$499) encapsulates the art of tone layering into a single box. With a few button pushes you can select two different amp models and cabinets, tweak EQ and gain stages for each setup, configure a global effects



Easy Does It: The GNX1's interface is an altar of simplicity.

The Ratings Game	Sounds	Flexibility	Programmability	Ease of Use	Value
DigiTech GNX1	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

chain, and even tune the resonance of the speaker cabinets. The real fun begins after you've dialed in two killer rigs. Using the GNX1's Warp knob, you can blend the characteristics of each setup to construct what DigiTech calls a HyperModel. For example, if one of your sounds is based on a high-gain Marshall, and the other is Vox-esque, you could Warp the two timbres into, say, an 80 percent Marshall/20 percent Vox mix. The operation is a brilliantly simplified version of what big-time studio engineers do when they record several amps onto different tracks, and then adjust the individual channel faders until the tonal blend kicks ass.

Of course, the GNX1 won't let

you go totally Queen or Radiohead because the unit is limited to layering two amp sounds. But guitarists with home studios can always record another HyperModel on a different track and construct a stereo spread comprising *four* different amps. Is that cool or what?

The Models

Of course, all the GNX1's tonal firepower is worthless if the amp models suck. They don't. While DigiTech doesn't claim the GNX1 produces exact timbral emulations of various amps (the manual uses a "based on..." caveat), the characteristics of each model are damn close to the real deals.

The Fender-style simulations

are tough, steely, and blues approved. You get the midrange punch and attitude that made those amps classics, as well as the gain control to push tones into that beatific torture zone of crying sustain and spanky grit.

Marshall- and Hiwatt-inspired

tones are slamming. The full-on overdrive and distortion timbres can be dialed in to evoke flavors reminiscent of classic Who and AC/DC, '80s shred, or modern rap-metal. The Vox-style model doesn't deliver the shimmering, upper-partial-harmonic sting of

DigiTech GNX1 Features

- 15 amp models
- 8 speaker cabinet emulations
- Acoustic guitar simulation
- 24 effects (11 simultaneously available)
- 48 factory/48 user presets
- 24-bit A/D/A converters
- Rhythm Trainer and Phrase Trainer
- Mac/PC editor/librarian software
- Expression pedal



Bench Tests

Warp Drive

a well-maintained AC30, but the emulation has plenty of signature Vox chime. For ultra-high-gain dosage, the Mesa/Boogie-like simulations absolutely *rage*. You can go for scooped mids, blistering highs, and/or insane sustain—whatever strikes fear into weak hearts.

On a more subtle, though no less important note, DigiTech was wonderfully restrained in engineering the base sounds of the GNX1's models. The amp simulations don't jump out as overhyped—there's no sense of "enhanced reality" or aggressively boosted low or high frequencies. Basically, you get a fairly accurate foundational tone—where you go from there is up to you. This may seem like a minute point, but some modeling devices start you out from a place you don't want to be, and you have to subtract elements to get a groovy tone. I prefer the non-hyped approach, where I get to mess stuff up, so the GNX1 was a comfortable fit for me.

Most of the unit's *factory* presets (which marry tweaked models with effects) are about what you'd expect—wing-ding wizardry to impress potential buyers in the store. Having said that, I stumbled across some surprises—such as Hybrid and WarpMe—that fit perfectly into a mix.

The User Interface

For all its power, the GNX1 is a no-brainer box when it comes to working the magic. The critical ops are given dedicated buttons, switches, and knobs, and a front-panel effects matrix ensures that negotiating parameter adjustments is as easy as scrolling through channel options on a digital cable-TV system.

During a product "Jury Box" for *Rumble* (GP's youth guitar and bass mag), I tossed the GNX1 to Unloco guitarist Brian Arthur and bassist Victor Escareno, and both players were

rocking—*sans* manual—in less than ten minutes. Each player selected amps, messed with cabinet configurations, tweaked gain stages and EQ, and constructed HyperModels after only

Contact Info

DigiTech, 8760 S. Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT 84070;
(801) 566-8800; digitech.com.

a brief explanation of the GNX1 concept. Robertson was especially jazzed after dialing in an

emulation of a multi-amp sound he used for his band's debut album, *Healing*, and he felt

EFFECT	VIBE	NOTABLE GOODIES
Wah	Righteously funky to blissfully blistered.	Choice of CryBaby, boutique, and full-frequency models; user-selectable wah range.
Pickup Simulator	Reasonable humbucker and single-coil emulations.	Beefs up single-coils (SC>HB) and thins out humbuckers (HB>SC).
Compressor	Chunky, punchy, and serves up mondo sustain.	It goes to "11." Specifically, an infinity setting wallops harder than a 20:1 compression ratio.
Whammy	Dive-bomber's delight.	You also get Intelligent Pitch Shift (IPS), Detune, and Pitch Shift modes.
Equalizer	No attitude, but clean and precise.	Preset bass frequency is a drag, but you can tweak frequencies between 300Hz and 8kHz by ± 12 dB.
Noise Gate	Enough control to quiet gremlins without cutting off notes.	Pluck mode follows picking dynamics to close gate after each note.
Chorus	Sexy.	Three waveforms: triangle, sine, or square.
Flange	Kick-ass swoosh.	Three waveforms: triangle, sine, or square.
Phaser	Sweet.	Three waveforms: triangle, sine, or square.
Tremolo	Massive throb.	Wide-ranging speed and depth controls.
Rotary Speaker	Gets the blues, Beatles, and gospel thangs.	Selectable horn and rotor crossover between 200Hz and 1.5kHz.
AutoYa, YaYa, SynthTalk	Cute tricks you probably won't use much.	None.
Envelope Filter	Deliciously weird.	It sounds tortured and wonderful. Go crazy!
Delay	Tight, articulate repeats.	Analog mode slightly corrupts audio quality as signal decays.
Reverb	Studio is clean and subtle, others (hall, garage, etc.) are on the trashy side. Spring emulation is appropriately surfy and sproingy.	Damping control simulates sound absorption. Awesome!



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The 20 year Groove

Hard to believe, but 20 years of Groove Tubes are now behind us. I thank each of you who've supported us. We all share a common blessing: those pesky musician's ears. We know when it's right, and suffer when it's wrong. It's been my heart's desire as a guitarist to seek great tone. Without these ears, and the grace of God, I would not be writing this letter to share a few stories from our past.

Summer of 1979:

Groove Tubes is born

I was shootin' pool and talkin' tone with my pal, Jaco Pastorius. I had just invented a way to measure and match power tubes to make the amp more musical. Our matched tubes sustained longer, had better balance, and could be distortion rated from #1 (early distortion, softer compression) to #10 (late distortion, more dynamic). We could hear the difference, and I knew I had a company, but was stuck on the name. Jaco suggested we write down every name that came to mind. Hours later, out came "Groove Tubes," and the 20 year adventure had begun. Jaco, if you're reading this in heaven, thanks.

Today, Groove Tubes is the world's leading brand of replacement tubes and are sold in 1,000's of shops around the world. We are also honored that amp makers like Fender, Ampeg, Soldano and many others choose our tubes.

Spring 1992: The Soul-o amps

Red Rhodes and I developed our Soul-o series amps out of our D75 tube amp and Trio tube preamp, adding more innovations: power stage switching from Class A/B to Class A; Clean and Scream channels could be played together; a parallel FX loop with mix control; shock mounted tubes and chassis for clarity at higher



My wife Siggi hand painted this Soul-o for Steve Miller.

Shop still builds our Soul-o amps, and Red's still smilin' some where up in heaven.

2001: God only knows...

After 20 years of divine inspiration, I doubt He'll let us down now. If you will continue to lend us your ears, and honor us with your business, I'll keep trying to make a difference you can hear. **Thanks again and God Bless you all,**

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Warp Drive

the GNX1 would make it easier for him to reproduce his layered "studio" tones onstage.

But whether you're a pro, weekend warrior, or rank amateur, the GNX1's intuitive, well-labeled interface successfully avoids tossing you into operational frustrations that tank creative juices. While it's always a good idea to read instructions, you'll only need the GNX1 manual to get hip to the unit's three modes (performance, preset, and FX), confirm save functions, assign expression-pedal parameters (you can control up to three parameters in real time), change MIDI mapping, assign the two available LFOs, familiarize yourself with effects-parameter minutia, and access the Jam-A-Long, Learn-A-Lick, and Rhythm Trainer features.

Bash Tests

Out in the scary world of club gigs, the GNX1 performed like a star. The tough-as-a-Chevy-truck casing survived my spastic stomps—as well as an accidental trip down a flight of stairs (tip: always check that your pedal bag is snapped shut before bending over to grab your guitar case) and a collision with a rolling bass cabinet.

For a singer/songwriter gig, I plugged my Guild X-160 into the GNX1 and routed a mono output directly to the mixer. The small room had wood floors and windows along an entire side wall—a deadly combination of reflective surfaces that can make your amp sound thin and sharp. Even through less-than-excellent P.A. speakers, however, the GNX1's British 4x12 cab-

inet emulation produced enough girth and low-mid emphasis to keep the people in the rear seats rocking. During the set, I switched between the unit's British combo (for clean sounds), British stack (for overdrive), and Fuzz (for E-Bow bits and silly solos) models, and the all-important vibe factor was terrific. And thanks to a decent monitor mix, I didn't miss my amp.

While in the studio producing the band Mudbath (mudbathband.com), I plugged the GNX1 into a Joe Meek SC-2 compressor, and then directly into a Mackie 32-8 console. Using a '78 Gibson Heritage Les Paul Standard, a Fender Strat, and an Epiphone ES-335, the unit delivered everything from buzzy, laser-beam riffs, big-ass stack sass, cutting clean tones, and lo-fi spittle. Every tone was constructed on the fly, and within 60 seconds. We did approximately six guitar tracks per song, with a vastly different tone for each track, and the GNX1 served up each and every one. I didn't plug in a single amp, or move a single mic to produce the demo's guitar sounds.

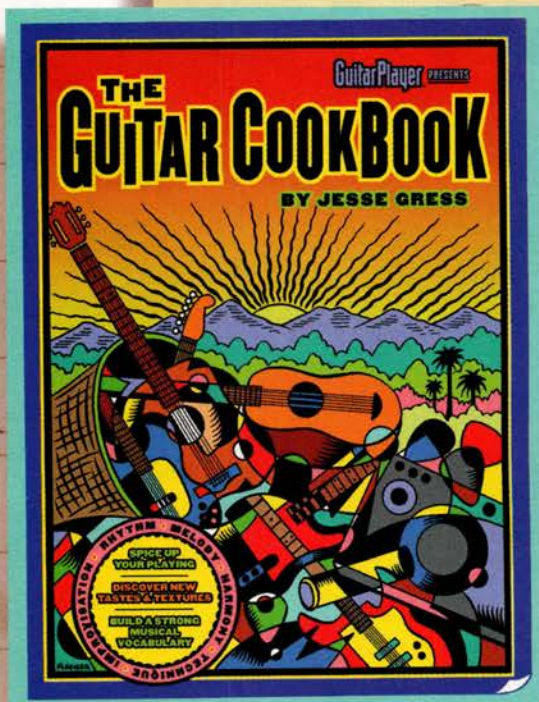
GNX Genius

I dig classic amps. I dig new amps. And I also embrace modeling. My belief has always been that the more tones available, the more creative options. The GNX1 provides a plethora of extremely groovy timbral colors and it lets you warp those colors into a blissful mixture of attitude and individuality. Short of owning a multitrack deck, a good selection of mics, a bunch of amps and cabinets, and a rack of effects, you can't touch the sound-sculpting power this little box offers. In a word—brilliant. ■



Unloco's Brian Arthur gets "warped" with the GNX1 before a recent show.

Dig In.

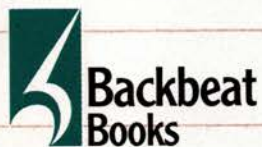


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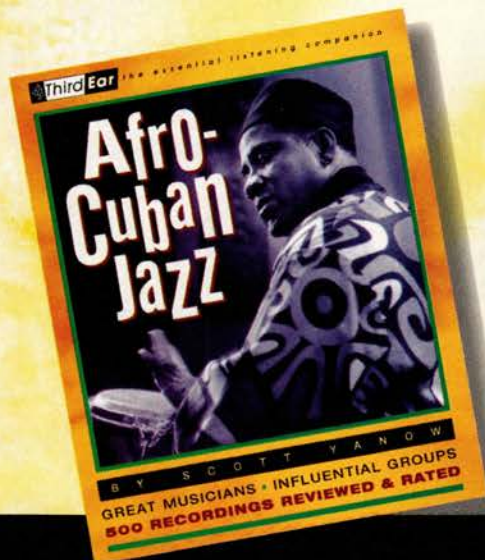
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By Scott Yanow

From Cuba to Puerto Rico to New York, an irresistible music began brewing in the 1940s. Blending bebop-based improvisations with Cuban and African rhythms, inventive musicians such as American trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban conguero Chano Pozo created a sizzling jazz style that still evolves today. This is the ultimate guide to every key Afro-Cuban jazz innovator past and present—Tito Puente, Poncho Sanchez, Chucho Valdés, Stan Kenton, and dozens more.

Scott Yanow edited the *All Music Guide to Jazz* and has written for such leading jazz magazines as *Cadence*, *JazzTimes*, *Downbeat*, and others.

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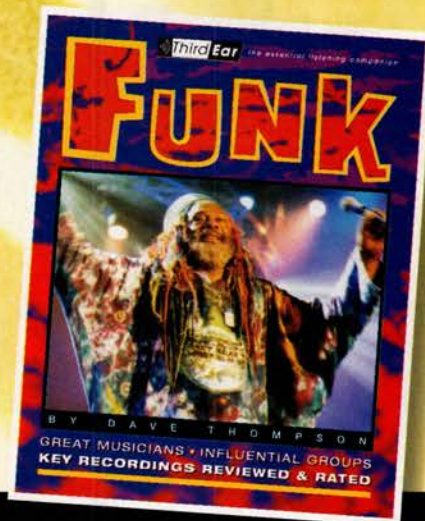
Celtic Music

Edited by Kenny Mathieson

Today's Celtic music hails from traditional homelands but also embraces new fusions from around the globe. This colorful guide captures the full flavor of this widely enjoyed music in all its forms—traditional, new Celtic, and Celtic-influenced. From the Chieftains to Christy Moore to Afro Celt Sound System, it explores solo artists, bands, singers and players of Celtic's unique instrumentation, including harps, pipes, fiddles, squeezeboxes, drums, mandolins, and more.

Kenny Mathieson writes for *Jazzwise*, *The Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*, and organizes the annual Celtic Connections festival.

Softcover, 192 pages, ISBN 0-87930-623-8, \$19.95



Funk

By Dave Thompson

From funk's James Brown roots to today's Red Hot Chili Peppers, this guide tracks the music that mixes R&B and soul with a little rock 'n' roll. Profiling the artists who "get on the good foot," it explores classic funk, funky soul, Motown funk, white funk, funky psychedelic, and more—the funkiest groove from George Clinton, Sly and the Family Stone, Tower of Power, Curtis Mayfield, Chaka Khan, Average White Band, War, and many more.

Dave Thompson has written over 70 rock music books, including the best-selling *Never Fade Away: The Kurt Cobain Story*.

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GP0601

Bench Tests

Fab Feline

Epiphone Wildkat

By Shawn Hammond

If you've been aching to get your rockabilly mojo working but can't swing the hefty price tags on classic Gretsch or Gibson boxes, your day has come. The Korean-made Epiphone Wildkat (\$799) is a budget-challenged rockabilly raver's dream with its P-90 pickups, flamed maple top, classy binding, Bigsby-style vibrato, and headstock nameplate that looks like something you'd find on a 1950s kitchen appliance.

The single-cutaway archtop features a 2"-deep body constructed of multiple slabs of mahogany that have been glued together and routed to create a hollow chamber—a design feature that adds depth and dimension to the Wildkat's sound. The glued-in, 22-fret neck is comfy and inviting, the fret ends are smooth and even, and the action is reasonably low. The chunky, Vibrotone tremolo also stays in tune well—even after violent vibrato moves—and it enhances sustain by creating more downward string pressure on the bridge than would occur with a trapeze-style tailpiece.

Plugged into a variety of amps (including a Reverend Hellhound 40/60 combo, a Vox AC30, and a silverface Fender Twin Reverb), the Wildkat kicks out cool retro-flavored tones. Its deliciously microphonic P-90s sound bright and girthy, and no matter how aggressively you wail on the bridge pickup, the 'kat never sounds harsh. The dual-pickup mode yields rumble-ready growl, and the individual volume knobs let you vary the tones from greasy and mean to lanky and spanky. Go, Daddy-O! With its resonant body and sensitive pickups, the Wildkat can be easily coaxed into riotous feedback. But flick to the neck position, ease off the volume, and crank the reverb for a creamy sound that's perfectly suited for "Sleepwalk" or scintillating jazz numbers.

Snapshot

Featuring alnico V P-90 pickups, a Bigsby-style

vibrato, and attitude to spare, Epiphone's Wildkat (\$799) delivers delightfully retro tones and drop-dead looks at a price that'll make you do a double take. The Wildkat wins an Editors' Pick Award.



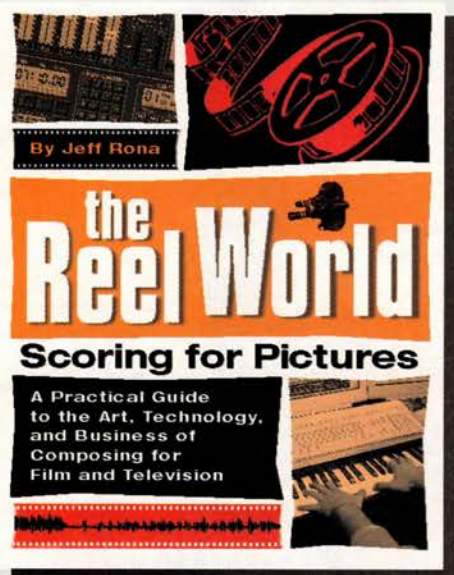
The Reel World

Scoring for Pictures

By Jeff Rona

Written by *Keyboard's* own Jeff Rona, this how-to book gives you the insider's view of the art, technology, and business of scoring for film and television. Both practical and inspiring, it focuses on your key concerns: ensuring musical aesthetics, using the most effective techniques, and understanding how the industry works.

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Bench Tests

Fab Feline

The Wildkat's retro-righteous tones make it an ideal choice for

'50s style blues and rock, though it could certainly do the trick for more aggressive styles. Factor in its tantalizing price—as well as

Contact Info

Epiphone, 645 Massman Dr., Nashville, TN 37210;
(615) 871-4500; epiphone.com.

the fact that you'll look like million bucks when you strap it

on—and this cat offers plenty to go wild about!

The Ratings Game	Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Hardware	Vibe	Value
Epiphone Wildkat	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

Gizmo Alert Danelectro Mini Pedals

I love contradictions. The fact that *Tomb Raider's* Lara Croft is a beautiful and sexy genius who can totally pummel bad guys is, like, wow! Same with James Bond—urbane, sophisticated, and a brutal killer. Danelectro's Mini pedals hold the same fascination. They're candy-coated cute, and yet they deliver serious tonal goodies. The latest models in the series match or exceed the under-\$49 price tag that made previous Mini's real bargains, but they also deliver more features.

Black Licorice Beyond Metal. No subtlety, no prisoners! The Licorice (\$59) is a bratty, spitty, evil-sounding distortion that's always on a full-cowabunga rage. The active bass knob adds girth and level, and the octave effect tracks dynamics and rapid-fire riffs extremely well. Kick the front end of a tube amp, and the Licorice's aggression takes on some warmth—plug it directly into a mixer and you get a cranky buzz. This nasty pedal isn't versatile, but it's a wonderful tool for layers, lo-fi punctuations, and sonic mayhem.

Chromatic Tuner. The Chromatic Tuner (\$49) offers a noiseless on/off switch, and leaving the device inline doesn't adversely affect guitar volume or tone. The bright red (sharp/flat) and green (in tune) LEDs are readily visible in total darkness, but the note-indicator screen only illuminates if you use the optional 9-volt power supply.

French Fries Auto Wah. The Frenchy (\$49) does a good job evoking '70s funkfests. The Resonance control lets you dial in vocal-

like wah flavors, and the Lo and Hi Range switch gives you booty or chank. Lo is the funkier, more dynamic setting. Hi Range compresses the signal and minimizes feel, but it's a hip option for lo-fi buckeroos.

PB&J Delay. The PB&J (\$69) is an articulate machine that delivers up to one second of delay via an analog/digital circuit. You can switch between long and short delay times, which is only "kind of" cool because the tiny footswitch is a tad difficult to nail on the fly, and the short/long setting doesn't include control over repeats. You can't, for example, dial in a slapback and then switch to a long setting with multiple, Robert Fripp-like undulating echoes. Still, the PB&J lets you go from expansive to spanky with one foot tap.

Rocky Road Spinning Speaker. Capable of underwater warbles, crazy gospel-organ swoops, and Siouxsie and the Banshees-style flutters, the Rocky Road (\$69) is great for comping and going nutso. A Drive control lets you add grit, and the pedal even simulates the buzz of a Leslie's rotor drive. Messing with the "speaker speed" via the Ramp Down and Ramp Up switch is delightful, though it would be nicer if an LED announced the feature was active.

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA

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Bench Tests

The Power of Simplicity

Line 6 Spider 212

By Art Thompson

Line 6's success with Pod, Amp Farm, and the Flex-tone series amplifiers led to the 1999 introduction of the Spider (reviewed December '99), a simplified and affordable digital amp aimed at younger players. The 1x12 combo sported a handful of amp models, an intuitive interface, and an innovative Smart Control FX system that let

users select and adjust six built-in effects almost as easily as tweaking the reverb and tremolo on a tube amp. Though a breakthrough in terms of user friendliness, the 50-watt Spider had one serious shortcoming—it lacked sufficient volume for gig use.

Line 6 has addressed this situation with the Spider 212 (\$899), which features the same controls

Snapshot

The 100-watt Spider 212 (\$899), a programmable 2x12 digital combo, features six amp models, an intuitive interface, and a brilliant Smart Control FX feature that makes it ultra easy to control the six onboard effects.

as its smaller brother, but packs a 100-watt output stage and a pair of Eminence-made 12s. As with the earlier Spider, the 212 has six amp models (Clean, Twang, Blues, Crunch, Recto, Insane) and a set

of drive, bass, mid, treble, and channel- and master-volume controls. Storing presets is a snap: select a model, dial in a sound you like, and press and hold one of the four channel buttons for three



The Spider 212's sleek front panel features analog-style controls and a super-simple two-knob effects section.

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
Line 6 Spider 212	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

seconds to load the new sound into memory. You can access the presets via the channel buttons, the optional FB4 footswitch (\$99), or Line 6's Floor Board (\$369)—which provides 12 memory locations and sports dual expression pedals for volume and wah.

Fast FX

Also borrowed from the first-generation Spider is the 212's ingenious Smart Control FX system,

which allows you to select *and* control an effect with the twist of a knob. Here's how it works: Flange, chorus, and tremolo are activated using the left knob, and you can vary the speed range over the small amount of rotation between each selection. The right knob activates delay, tape echo, and ping-pong, and provides level adjustment for each effect (delay time is set with the Tap button).

Yes, the editing is extremely

limited, and you can only have one modulation and one delay effect on at the same time. But the Smart Control FX system rules because it requires the zero brainpower you

want to devote to effects tweaking when you're in the middle of a set.

Most of the effects are happening, too. The chorus has nice shimmer, the tremolo sounds

Line 6 Spider Features

- Amp model selector
- Drive, EQ, and volume controls
- Four programmable channels
- Smart Control FX knobs
- Tap-tempo button
- Reverb level control
- Master volume
- Floor Board and headphone jacks
- Two 12", ceramic-magnet speakers



The Power of Simplicity

juicy and has an excellent speed range, and the ping-pong delay is spacious and tons of fun. You automatically get rockabilly-style slapback echo when you select tape delay, which is cool because it's not possible to tap in such a short repeat. The standard delay setting provides an ambient echo for soaring solos. The 212's only disappointing effect is the flange, which doesn't deliver the classic, jet-like swoosh. The separate reverb offers some spring-like warmth, and it features a dedicated level control that can elicit surf-approved spring when turned up.

Spider Sounds

Auditioned with a variety of guitars—including a Gibson Les Paul Elegant, a PRS McCarty, and various Fender Strats—the 212 proved two things: It has sufficient muscle for stage use, and most of its amp simulations are happening (some of the sounds are quite reminiscent of Pod models). The 212 sounds great through headphones, and the headphone jack doubles as a recording output.

The Clean setting combines Fender and Dumble tonal elements to yield crisp low-gain sounds and a chunkier, but still fairly clean, tone when you max the Drive control. The Twang model delivers a brighter, grindier Bassman vibe

that works well for rootsy lead and rhythm work. The Blues and Crunch settings unleash Marshall-style attitude—the former has a cleaner, plexi-style edge that's great for Bluesbreakers riffs, while the latter is browner, more distorted, and better suited for Van Halen-style burn.

Modern shred is spoken in the Mesa/Boogie-flavored Recto setting—which packs aggressive scooped-mid chunk—and Insane, a Line 6 creation with *stupefying* gain, along with some annoying Geiger counter-like chatter. Line 6 says this is a result of the noise gate switching on and off. Bypassing the gate stops the chatter, but the noise level also increases dramatically. Both models sound heavy and sinister at low volumes, but the presets' humongous low-end murks the focus and punch at high volumes—it helps to trim the bass way back when rocking out with a loud band. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the speakers tend to sound a little flubby when pushed hard. Plugging into a closed-back cab would likely enhance the sense of presence in these tones, but, unfortunately, the 212 doesn't offer an extension-speaker jack. Also, all of the 212's higher-gain models sound rather harsh with single-coils—humbuckers are the way to go for fattest grind.

Hidden Things

The 212 has several hidden features that can be used to further tailor sounds. For example, you can kick on Boost (which provides a jump in clean volume) by holding the Tap button and turning the channel-volume knob up past 12 o'clock. Or you can switch on the stompbox-style Distortion function by holding the Tap button and turning the Drive control past noon. A presence boost and a noise gate are activated in similar fashion by holding the Tap button while turning the treble and reverb knobs, respectively. Another important hidden function is the Auto-FX bypass, which is handy when you want to zip between amp models without hearing the factory-selected effects.

Bottom Line

While the Spider 212 isn't significantly less expensive than some of its more feature-laden competitors, it's a good choice for players who want an ultra-easy-to-use amp that can cover everything from blues to country to hard rock and modern metal. If you've been thinking about trying a modeling amp on for size, but are reluctant to spring for something that requires keeping the manual close at hand, the Spider 212 is the simple solution.

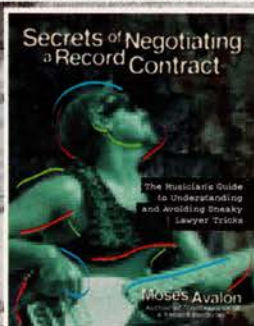
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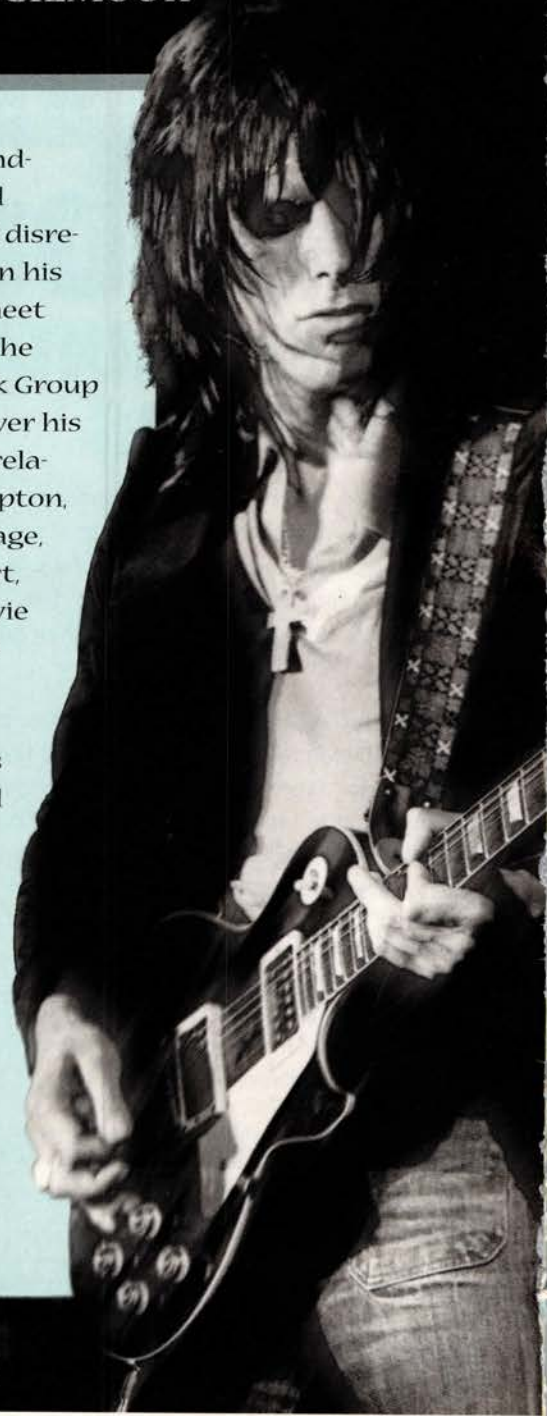
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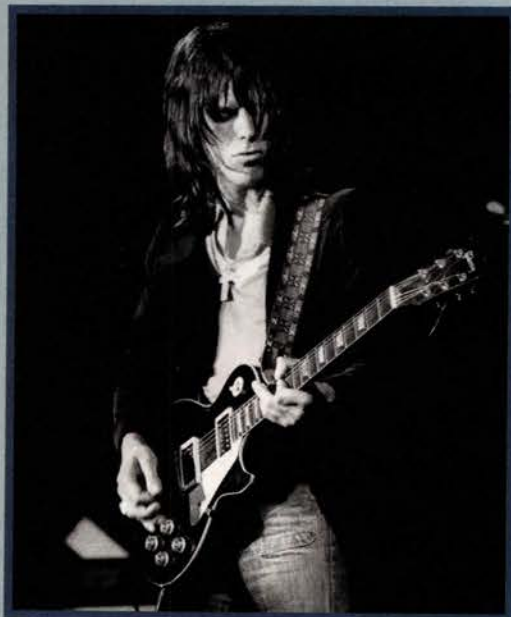
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Bench Tests

Factory Direct

Boss GP-20 Amp Factory

By Matt Blackett

Roland—the parent company of Boss—led the amp-modeling charge in 1995 with their groundbreaking VG-8, a device that not only modeled amps and speakers, but stompboxes, synth textures, and even pickups. Since then, the company's COSM (Composite Object Sound Modeling) technology has trickled down to many popular Roland and Boss products, the latest being the GP-20 Amp Factory (\$299)—a stompbox proces-

sor that combines amp and speaker models with user-friendly features. I tested the Factory in a variety of amplified and direct applications with a '50s Reissue Fender Strat, a Gibson Les Paul, and a P-90-loaded Epiphone Wildkat.

Factory Tour

The GP-20 offers 22 different amp models and 26 speaker

Snapshot

The Boss GP-20 Amp Factory (\$299) puts the power of Roland's COSM amp and speaker simulations in a sturdy floor pedal. Featuring 22 amp models and analog and digital outputs, the GP-20 is a great choice for recording and live applications.



Bench Tests

Factory Direct

configurations (each amp's original cab, plus 4x12, 4x10, 2x12, and 1x12 options). You also get a straightforward 3-band EQ, a presence control, and gain and master-volume knobs. There are buttons labeled Variation (for accessing the 11 amps not listed on the front) and Memory (for storing one preset), and two beefy Boss-style footswitches for bypassing the Amp Factory or toggling between a stored sound and a manual mode.

The GP-20's back panel is to-

tally simple, with mono analog input and output jacks, an S/PDIF output, and a 3-position switch for running the unit into a guitar amp, a power amp/speaker cab setup, or direct into a mixer or multitrack recorder. Lastly, you get a 9-volt DC jack, although the Amp Factory can also run on six AA batteries.

Because the Amp Factory doesn't come with factory presets, you have to trust your ears to get up and running. But thanks to the perfectly simple interface, that's easy to do. I simply set the output switch to the guitar amp setting, ran the GP-20 into a Fender Twin,

Contact Info

Boss, 5100 S. Eastern Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90040;
(323) 890-3700; rolandus.com.

and started auditioning amp models. The JC Clean and Black Panel sounded great with a Strat, offering lots of character and body. The Tweed model produced cool rock and blues tones—particularly with P-90s—and the sounds cleaned up well when the guitar's volume was turned down. In fact, even super high-gain sounds such as R-Fier Stack (Mesa/Boogie) and Modern Stack (Soldano) responded beautifully to changes in volume or

picking dynamics. And these models were not at all noisy—bravo! Other standout models include American Combo (an unidentified Mesa/Boogie combo) and Vintage Stack (a Plexi-Marshall simulation).

You should also explore bypassing an amp's preamp stage and running the GP-20 into an amp's effects return or a good-sounding power amp and speaker cabinet. I got some of the best

Continued on page 145

The Ratings Game	Sounds	Flexibility	Programmability	Ease of Use	Value
Boss GP-20 Amp Factory	♥♥♥♥	♥♥♥	♥♥♥	♥♥♥♥♥	♥♥♥♥

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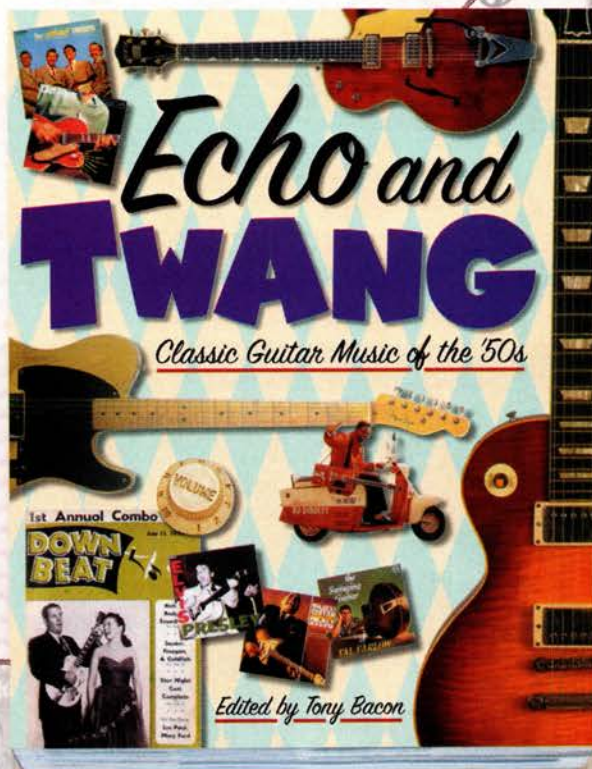
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Vibrato Workout

BY ADAM LEVY



MOST GREAT PLAY-

ers—from Django Reinhardt to B.B. King to Yngwie Malmsteen—put a signature shiver on their lead lines. If your own vibrato is—pardon the pun—a little shaky, here's a simple exercise you can do to get your chops in shape.

First, play Ex. 1a along with a metronome, drum machine, or other reliable time-keeper. Use whatever sort of vibrato you like,

but be sure to align your up/down motions with your metronome's clicks. Start with a 1:1 ratio. In other words, for every metronome click, you'll make one movement up or down. Spend a few moments at whatever tempo you choose, and make sure your gestures are synchronized with your time-keeper. Once you've got the 1:1 ratio down at a variety of tempos, practice with a 2:1 ratio (two moves per click), then 3:1, 4:1, and

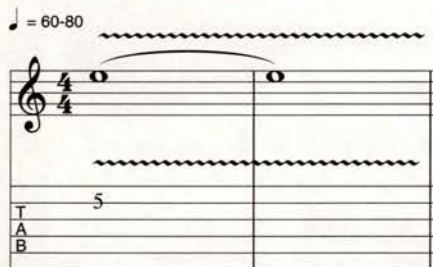
so on, until you've reached your practical limit. This will get your vibrato *rate* under control.

Next, repeat the entire process, this time focusing on the *depth* of your vibrato. Start with a quarter-tone shimmy, then try half-step, three-quarter-step, and whole-step shakes. Each of these should be practiced at different rates (1:1, 2:1, etc.), and at different tempos.

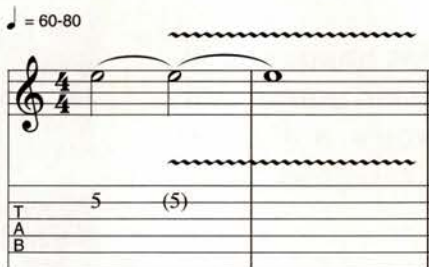
Besides rate and depth, another

important variable to consider is exactly *when* to start your vibrato. You can start wavering at the initial attack (as in Ex. 1a), or let the note sound briefly before you kick in your vibrato (see Examples 1b and 1c). We're dealing with some really subtle stuff here—and, it should be said, it's fine to play guitar with zero vibrato—but if you want to shape up your shimmy, this exercise is one of the best ways to do it.

Ex. 1a



Ex. 1b



Ex. 1c



Jazz philosopher Pat Martino works out on his Gibson L-5S, circa 1977.

JAZZ GIANT PAT MARTINO seems to be able to play anything his imagination can conceive, and then some. Such supreme linear facility is the result of years of hard work on the instrument—and several conceptual epiphanies. In our June '77 issue, the guitarist told *GP* of one of the breakthroughs he made, which helped him shape his seamless style.

"When I was 14," Martino said, "I became aware of the importance of being able to pivot into any melody, using any finger, from any previous

playing position. For example, if you have a line you want to hear but can't get to it from where you are because you can only start it with your 3rd finger, then it is not accessible to you. To overcome this, take melodies you know and try starting them with your 1st finger, then your 2nd, and so on—including starting on different strings. This will shoot you into different fingerings, and as you develop them, you will automatically gain more access to your complete vocabulary."

TIPS JAR

The Stretcher

BY ADAM LEVY



SPEED AND PRECISION

aren't the only fretting-hand skills a guitarist needs to cultivate. Another biggie is flexibility—you know, for expansive chord voicings or those double-wide melodic leaps. One way to extend your reach is to play exercises such as Ex. 1a. This little workout starts near the bottom of the neck, with your fingers outlining a *Gmaj7* chord. That shape is easy enough for most hands, but the next chord—*G#dim7*, on beat two—is definitely a stretch. Your hand returns to the simpler grip on beat three (*Ama7*), and then stretches again on beat four (*A#dim7*). Continue this alternating cycle of major-7th/diminished-7th up the neck until you run out of board. (Use whatever picking strategy you're most comfortable with.) This relax/stretch/relax/stretch cycle makes a great warm-up routine, and it will definitely help improve your reach.

In Ex. 1b's variation, the chord shapes are the same as in Ex. 1a, but the four-sixteenth groupings alternate chord by chord: ascending/descending/ascending/descending. Your fretting hand grabs a relatively easy shape for the major-7th voicings, and then stretches wide for the diminished-7th chords.

You can develop your own variations by reordering each chord's note scheme. Also, try dropping the finger forms down onto your middle four strings or your bottom four. The harmonies will be different, and your hand will get a slightly harder workout because the tension is higher on the lower strings.



Ex. 1a

♩ = 54-72

Gmaj7 G#dim7 Ama7 A#dim7 Bmaj7 etc.

Ex. 1b

♩ = 54-72

Gmaj7 G#dim7 Ama7 A#dim7 Bmaj7 etc.

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Melodic Patterns

BY ADAM LEVY



WHEN IT COMES TO EXERCISES

for getting your picking and fretting hands in synch, melodic patterns are hard to beat. What's a melodic pattern?

It's any small melodic fragment—usually two to

four notes in a row—that you sequence through a scale. For example, take the first three notes of a G major scale: G, A, B. (The entire scale is G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G.) Note that the interval between G and A is a second, and the interval between A

and B is also a second. So our G, A, B fragment can be sized up as a second-plus-a-second. If we then start the second-plus-a-second series from the 2nd degree of the G scale, we have A, B, C. From the 3rd degree, we have B, C, D, and so on.

Ex. 1

♩ = 72-90

Ex. 2a

Ex. 2b

Ex. 2c

Ex. 2d

Ex. 2e

Ex. 2f

Ex. 3a

♩ = 72-90

Ex. 3b

♩ = 72-90

Ex. 3c

♩ = 72-90





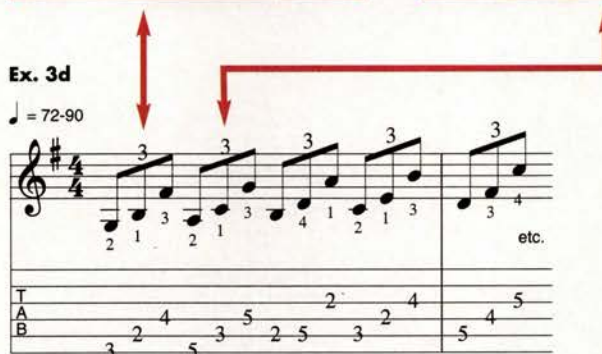
Follow that sequence through a two-octave scale, and you get **Ex. 1**.

You can generate variations on the *G, A, B* pattern by changing the order of the notes (see **Examples 2a-2f**), and any of these can be sequenced through the *G* major scale. For instance, **Ex. 3a** shows what happens if you take **Ex. 2d** through the scale.

Example 3b uses the same notes as Ex. 3a, but with a sixteenth-sixteenth-eighth rhythm instead of the triplets we've used so far. Of course, there are many more rhythmic variations to explore. Try sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth and eighth-sixteenth-sixteenth, as well as larger note values, such as eighth-quarter-eighth.

In Ex. 3c, we compound Examples 2a and 2c for a six-note melodic pattern starting on each scale degree. **Example 3d** shows a melodic pattern with wider intervals—a third between the G and B, and a fifth between B and F#. In Ex. 3e, we return to our second-plus-a-second interval scheme, but use the melodic pattern to *descend* the scale.

As you can see, varying the intervals, rhythms, and the order of notes can spawn *many* melodic patterns, and each pattern offers a different kind of drill for your hands. Make melodic patterns part of your daily practice regimen, and your friends may soon be asking, “Hey, have you been working out?”



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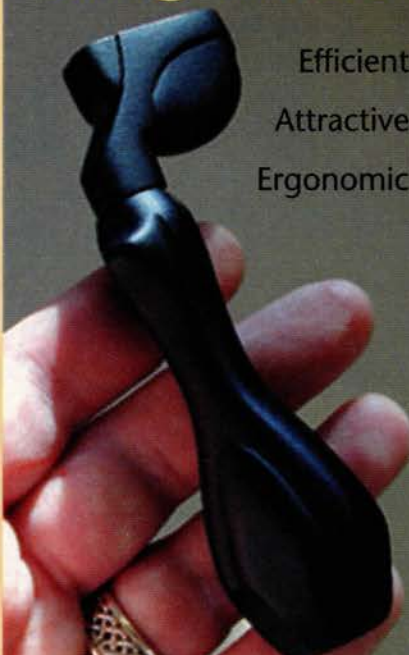
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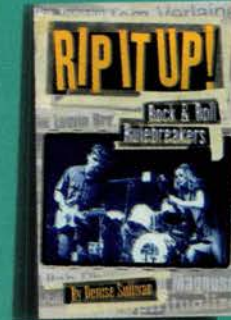
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RIUGP0108

Factory Direct

Continued on page 138

sounds by plugging directly into a Mesa/Boogie Simul-Class 2: Ninety power amp driving a Marshall 4x12. The Amp Factory really came alive in this configuration, sounding full, punchy, and dynamic.

Going direct into a mixer with the Amp Factory also worked well, but changing the output switch to Line only got me in the tonal ballpark—I definitely felt the need to make some gain and EQ tweaks to get the sound I wanted. Connecting the S/PDIF output to a Roland VS-880 hard-disk recorder (which, ironically, contains COSM amp models) and recording cool sounds was a piece of cake. However, I did apply the “less is more” rule with the gain knob because the tones sounded slightly buzzy when running the GP-20 direct.

Cabinet Factory

Despite the fact that Boss voices each model with its original speaker cab, great things happen if you experiment with the different cabinet options—which is like having five preset EQ curves at your disposal. And speaking of EQ, the Factory's bass, middle, and treble controls have a tremendous amount of range and can take any of the amp models from darkness into light and back again.

Memory Factory

Programming the GP-20 is as simple as can be—dial in a tone you like, hit the Write button twice, and you're there. Using the right manual-memory footswitch, you can toggle between your stored sound and manual mode. Manual mode reflects the pedal's actual knob positions, so you can make real-time tweaks. (I'd mark my favorite settings with a Sharpie pen so I could recall, say, a rhythm sound with consistency.) If you're going into a guitar amp, you can hit the left on/off pedal to use your amp's tone for a third option. That's all you get, however, and players often demand more on-the-fly tonal choices. A footswitch jack to control the variation button would double the tones at your feet. In addition, the Amp Factory doesn't come with any effects, nor does it have stereo outputs, which would allow punishing two amps at once.

Bottom Line

The GP-20 delivers great sounding, believable amp models at an affordable price, and its clean, quiet operation make it a cool choice for recording. From a gigging standpoint, it doesn't have the flexibility of a floor-style processor, but most of those devices either cost considerably more, or sacrifice tone for features. It's refreshing that Boss didn't try to make this box do *everything*. What it does, it does very well—kind of like a cool old amp.



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4. Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges comprised of noted songwriters, producers and music industry professionals. Songs will be judged based upon melody, composition and lyrics (when applicable). The quality of performance and production will not be considered. Prizes will be awarded jointly to all authors of any song: division of prizes is responsibility of winners. Void where prohibited. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply.

5. Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility/recording rights/publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation.

6. Winners will be determined by January 15, 2002, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. CDs, Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned.

I have read and understand the rules of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

SIGNATURE

DATE

JACK OF SPEED

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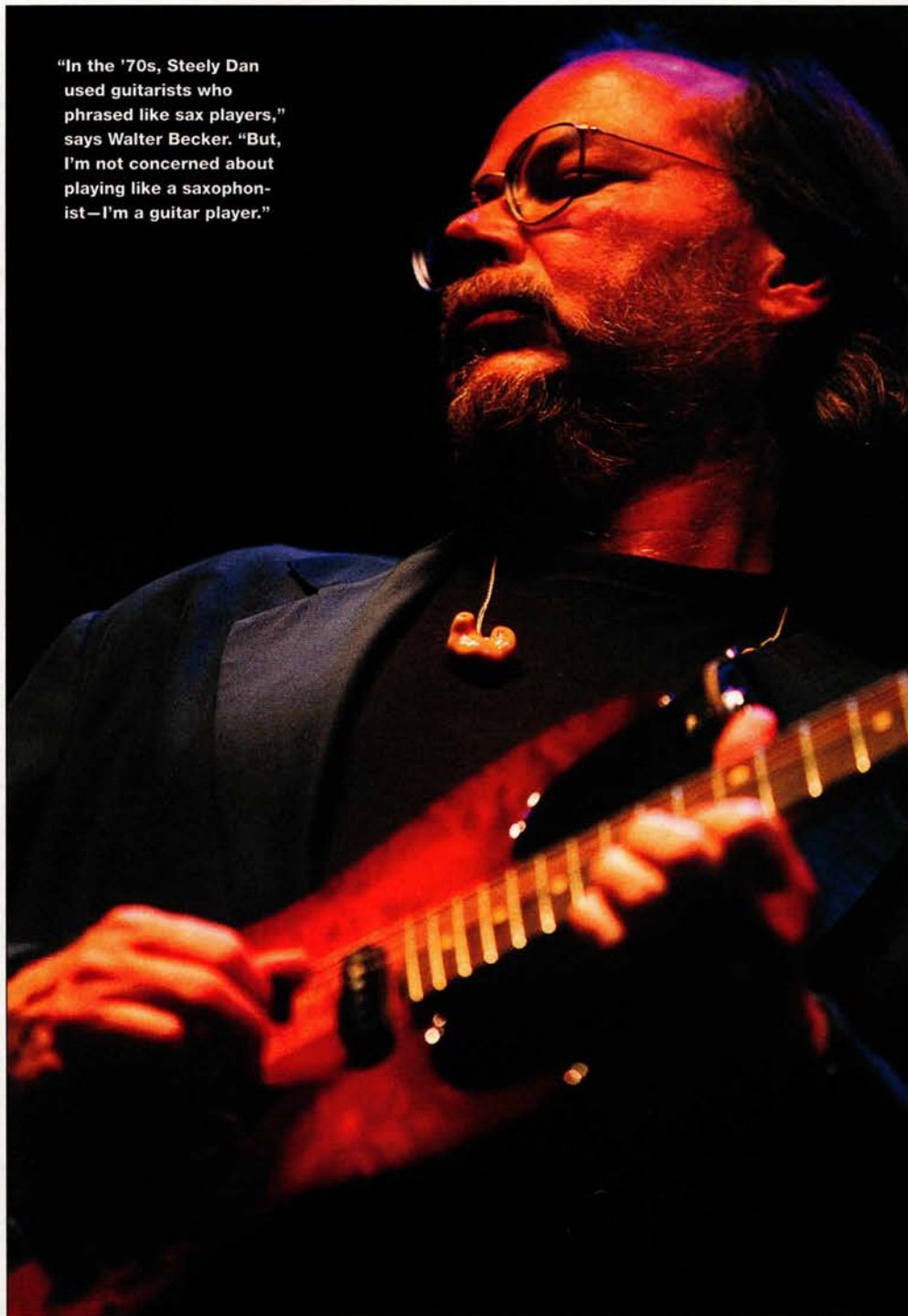
"In the '70s, Steely Dan used guitarists who phrased like sax players," says Walter Becker. "But, I'm not concerned about playing like a saxophonist—I'm a guitar player."

One fundamental difference between Steely Dan's past and present-day incarnations is that co-founder Walter Becker has now taken on the primary guitar duties. On the band's Grammy-winning *Two Against Nature* [Giant], he covers all of the guitars on four songs and plays lead to Jon Herington's rhythm on three. (Studio aces Hugh McCracken, Dean Parks, and Paul Jackson, Jr. guest on other cuts.)

On *Two Against Nature*, Becker laces his relatively understated solos with ample rhythmic and harmonic subtleties. On "Jack of Speed," he finesses each note with breathy dynamics and soulful jazz touches, suggesting a Steve Cropper-meets-Larry Carlton vibe. Essentially a mutated 14-bar $F\sharp$ minor blues, this medium-tempo groove masterpiece features no less than five guitar tracks—all performed by Becker. Before we dig Becker's solo in Ex. 1, let's check out its underlying chord progression.

In most standard 12-bar blues, the first four measures center around the tonic or I chord. Here, the $Im7$ ($F\sharp m7$) is supplanted by a three-chord move comprising the $\flat VII/I$, $\flat VI maj9$, and $IV m7$ ($E/F\sharp$, $Dmaj9$, and $Bm7$), that creates motion in an otherwise static

Continued on page 149



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Jack of Speed

By Walter Becker and Donald Fagen

Ex. 1

Guitar Solo

♩ = 91

3:04

1

F#m7 E/F# Dmaj9 F#m7 Bm7 Dmaj9 F#m7

mf

10 12/14 12 9 B1/4 10~ (X) 11 (11) 9 (9) 11 10 12 9 12~ (X) 10~ 11 9 (13) 12 10~ 11 10 12

T
A
B

* P.M. = palm mute

5

Em9 A6 Dm9 G13 F#m7 E/F#

12/14 (14) B 12 (13) 13 12 10 13 12 10 12 11 10 9 12 10 9 12 9 11 9~ 11 9 11 (11) 9

T
A
B

8

F#m7 E/F# C#7 D7 D#7 Bm7 C#7

11 (9) 10 11 9 11 9 11 /11 9 10 9 10 12 10 9 12 14 12 10 10 9 12

T
A
B

11

F#m7 E/F# F#m7 E/F# F#m7 E/F#

P.M. B1/4 12~ 14 (12) 14 12 14 12 9 B1/4 10(10)~

T
A
B

3:40

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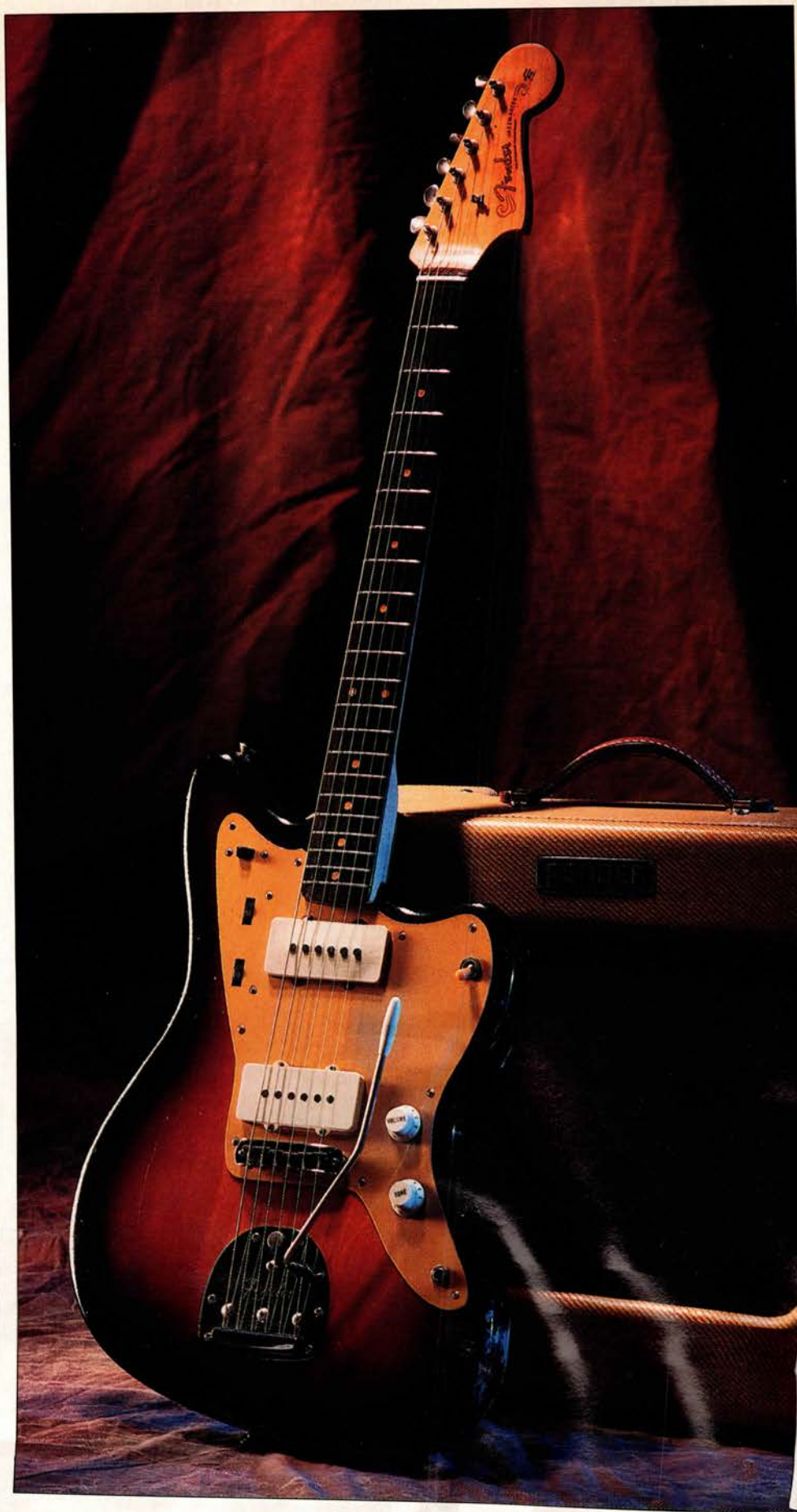
Encore

This beauty is a Jazzmaster from the model's first year, 1958. Intended to lure jazz musicians away from their archtops, the Jazzmaster embodied features that Leo Fender considered improvements over Teles and Strats. These features included a body shape with offset waists, flat-coil pickups, and a vibrato system that entailed a bit of string length between the pivoting bridge and tailpiece (versus the Strat's combo bridge/tailpiece). An independent tone circuit (with controls on the upper left bout) facilitated preset volumes and tones. Finally, the model signaled Fender's upcoming shift from maple to rosewood fretboards.

Ultimately the Jazzmaster failed because of its heavy body, noisy pickups, and impractical "Trem-Lock" mechanism. More important, the vibrato was ill suited to aggressive styles, and the guitar's sweet tone lacked the sharpness and sustain that had characterized Fenders in the first place. While the Jazzmaster wasn't "Fender" enough to rival enduring designs such as the Tele and Strat, it was way *too* Fender to convince jazzers to trade in their Gibson L-5s.

The Jazzmaster had its heyday in the hands of the Ventures, the Surfaris, and teenagers who emulated surf-era combos. It fell out of fashion, then regained some popularity among New Wavers and grungers. This month's Encore, serial no. 31587, features the cool gold anodized pickguard—a stock feature for the first year of production. Guitar courtesy of Jerry Carmen (1950 Fender Deluxe amp courtesy of McKenzie River Music, Eugene, OR). Photo by Kent Peterson.

—TOM WHEELER ■



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A black and white photograph of Steve Lukather, a man with a beard and tattoos, playing a black Ovation electric/acoustic guitar. He is wearing a dark t-shirt with a red graphic and brown cargo pants. The background is a solid blue color.

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